



Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands Inc
The right tree in the right place for the right reason

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TREAT News No. 20 November 1998

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

November 14th - TREAT / DEH Plant Propagation and Identification Workshop

December 4th - TREAT XMAS party. Supper Room of Malanda Show Pavilion 7pm. Bring a plate. Tea, coffee and wine provided. Guest speaker.

December 18th - Nursery Xmas break-up Friday morning. Friday morning nursery work resumes January 8th.

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AN AMBITION REALISED!

A Near Octogenarian Visits Ancient Trees

by Joan Wright

Ever since I heard of their existence, I wanted to see and be able to touch the "Stockwellias", growing at the foot of Queensland's highest mountain, Mt Bartle Frere.

The pilgrimage, to be led by Tony Irvine, who himself discovered some of the ancient trees, was fixed for September 12th (just 2 days before my 80th birthday.) According to Tony the walk wasn't too long or difficult so I decided that I would try it.

As we assembled at Lamin's Hill Lookout and more and more people arrived, we realised that many people shared my ambition. Over seventy people turned out to see these ancient gum-trees, surviving in the heart of our tropical rainforest.

After a short drive down the Gurkha Road we stopped and dived down a narrow, muddy track beset with leeches. Tony's estimate of length and difficulty proved to be rather optimistic but in spite of slippery slopes and steep pitches, we finally achieved our aim.

Above us, soaring towards the sky, rose the fat, rough brown trunk of a "Stockwellia", but we could not see the leaves or flowers; they were too high. A little further into the forest we found the king of these giants, a monstrous tree with the biggest buttress roots I have ever seen.

Among the party of "Stockwellia" admirers there were children, including a small baby; folk not in the best of health, and a contingent of student-foresters from Papua New Guinea.

All of us felt some degree of satisfaction at achieving a sight of these special trees, as we turned away from them and left them towering oblivious over our slippery steps.

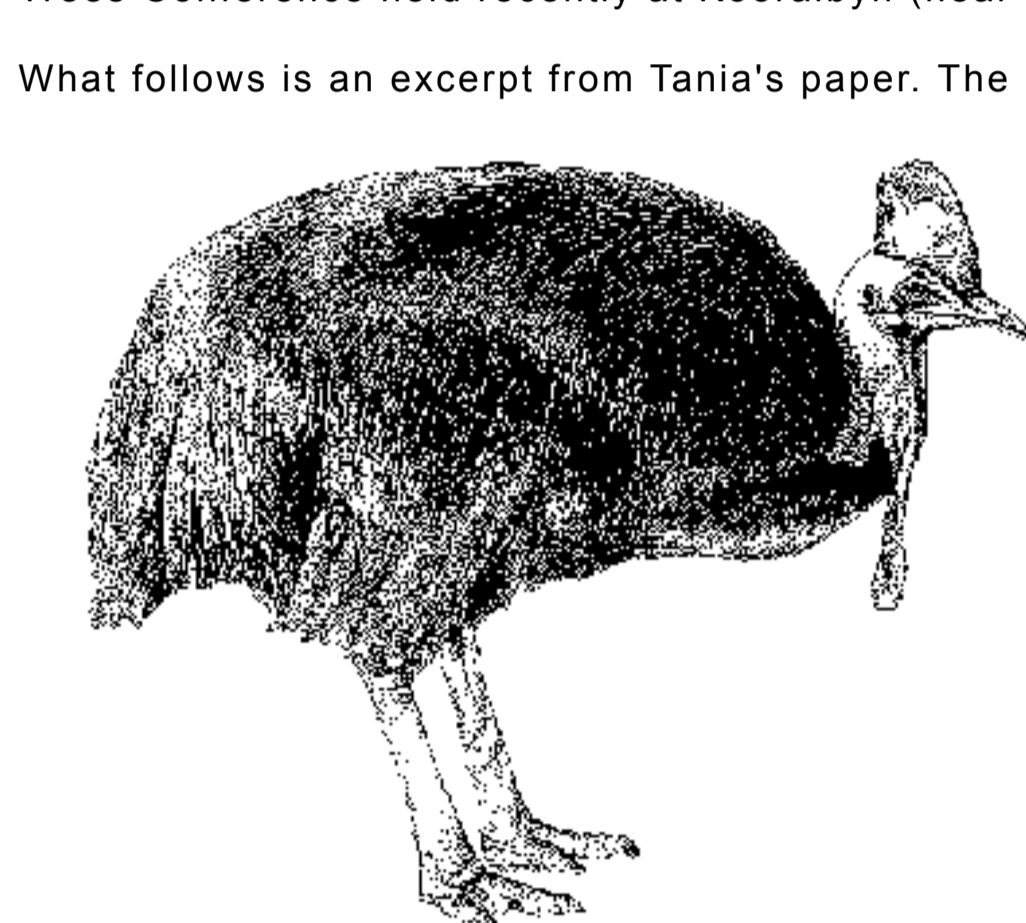
As a footnote I would like to add that without the strong arm and supporting hand of one of the forestry students I might not have made it back up those slippery slopes to the Gurkha Road. Our trip made a satisfying and enjoyable start to my birthday celebrations.

TREES, RATS, CASSOWARIES & PEOPLE

Community Nature Conservation at work in Far North Queensland

TREAT and the nursery are now launching into their second year of the Walter Hill Ranges Rehabilitation Project. Tania Murphy recently delivered a talk at the second Managing and Growing Trees Conference held recently at Kooralbyn (near Beaudesert).

What follows is an excerpt from Tania's paper. The project is an example of the great contribution TREAT is making to nature conservation and tree planting in Far North Queensland.



The Walter Hill Ranges project gives an on-ground example of the combined efforts of TREAT members, the Department of Environment and Heritage, cane growers, and other community groups achieving great outcomes for nature conservation.

Application was made through the Natural Heritage Trust to fund a three year rehabilitation project in the Walter Hill Ranges. The range extends from Mt Fisher in the uplands through to the Tully - Mission Beach area of the coastal lowlands representing the last area where upland and lowland rainforest remain linked between Cairns and Townsville. Critical linkages on a landscape scale were identified in narrow necks of the remaining forests. In particular, two sites were selected for their ecologically strategic locations and most importantly keen and cooperative landholders.

The uplands site flanks Massey Creek and provides an opportunity to work with the dairy industry to demonstrate productivity gains known to result from provision of increased shade and improved water quality to dairy cattle.

The lowlands site presented the challenge to repair a severely degraded riparian zone abutting Whing Creek, and provided another chance to work with the Bureau of Sugar Experimental Stations (BSES) in demonstrating integrated pest management for cane rodents through revegetation of weedy non-crop pest refuges.

The Whing Creek site, in close proximity to the Mission Beach cassowary population, also provides the opportunity to increase food resources and improve mobility for the endangered southern cassowary.

Improvements in the local riparian and aquatic environments and reduction in erosion, sedimentation and nutrient run-off are also key objectives.

The first plantings were completed in the April-May 1998 planting season. A community tree planting attracted 50 volunteers planting around 4500 trees. (Many thanks to those TREAT members who assisted on the day!) We were also assisted by local cane farmers, community members and of course, C4 (Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation).

The site at Whing Creek is easily visible on the eastern side of the Bruce Highway at the Mission Beach turn off at El Arish. Take a closer look next time you're whizzing down the coast. Tree growth at the site has been nothing short of phenomenal. I thoroughly recommend a drive by, especially to all those members who faithfully pot up trees on Friday mornings at the nursery; take a look how your babies have grown!

Our goal is to plant 12 000 trees for the project this year and we look forward to your involvement. TREAT on TAP (TREAT's school education program) will also play a role this year with the nearby El Arish Primary School a likely participant in the program in the new year.

The Birds and the Bees, the Flowers and the Trees!!

What's going on at Pelican Point??

by Dan Murphy

Thousands of trees have been planted through many projects in far north Queensland over the last 10-15 years. However few community groups, organisations or individuals quantitatively measure or monitor the progress and success of these projects after the initial development and establishment stage has been completed. TREAT has been doing just that at Pelican Point since 1996.

Pelican Point is a flood margin reserve (ex farmland) on the foreshore of Tinaroo Dam. Over 15 000 native trees and shrubs have been planted since 1991 (mostly between 1993 and 1996) to create rainforest, tall open forest, woodland and grass/ sedge/land communities. The Department of Environment and Heritage, Department of Natural Resources (Forestry and Water), Wet Tropics Tree Planting Scheme and Atherton Shire Council have all been involved in this project over the years. The site is now managed by DNR - Forestry.

TREAT members regularly monitor bird and small mammal utilisation of this revegetated area. Volunteers have also been monitoring flowering and fruiting at 4-6 week intervals.

TREAT has recently been successful in obtaining funds from the Natural Heritage Trust to continue to monitor the post development/establishment success of the Pelican Point plantings. The monitoring project aims to demonstrate techniques that will indicate whether original aims of the revegetation project are succeeding. Techniques involve monitoring vegetation changes, flowering and fruiting phenologies and changes in bird and small mammal usage, all of which relate to the original aims of the established project.

The phenology work will provide information on the time of seed production for both forest rehabilitation groups and farm forestry interests. It will also provide the time to first fruiting after planting for many species. In addition, since the flowering/fruiting measurements are coinciding with the small mammal survey, the data may show whether there are any population associations with the time and density of flowering and fruiting of particular species and the communities. Monitoring the vegetation changes and growth rates will provide valuable information on ecological rehabilitation techniques, farm forestry techniques, species selection and species behaviour in the different planting densities as microhabitat changes over time.

The techniques developed during the study will be of value to other community groups, professional groups associated with rehabilitation and to farm foresters.



Natural Heritage Trust Funds for MAZLIN CREEK

by Helen Adams

The Mazlin Creek Rehabilitation Project (Beantree Road section) has begun - thanks to NHT funding. At a meeting in September, it was decided this year to stabilise and revegetate approx. 100 metres of creek bank on Tom Inderbitzens property. Work on Tom's place will begin close to a small but impressive remnant of Type 5b rainforest - the same type as Tolga Scrub - to take advantage of this bonus.

Since rats know Tom's place as "rat heaven" (he grows macadamia nuts which they love) Nigel has scheduled a 3 day trapping program beginning on November 2, to establish baseline data on rat habitation for comparison over time. The principle is that rats live and breed along the grassy, weed infested creek banks and go out to feed on the nuts. If the creek bank is tree, it is no longer attractive to rats and they move on. This monitoring would compliment the "cane-rat" work on the coast.

Another aspect of this project is the trialing of some "soft-engineering" techniques to stabilise the creek bank prior to planting. Mike Richardson from Macaferri is keen to do this before the first flood flow. Some bank modifications and drainage work is also needed to ensure overland water flow is controlled. Spraying of the site was carried out by DEH early in October and now we can see the scope of the task ahead - eek!

FRUIT OF THE MONTH

by Tania Murphy

Litsea leefeana (otherwise known as **Bollywood**, **Bolly Beech**, **Bollygum**, **Brown Bollywood**, etc.)

Litsea leefeana is a terrific wildlife resource. The green, red, purple or black fleshy fruits are a favourite of cassowaries, fruit pigeons and metallic starlings while the leaves provide food for possums. However the fruits are not suitable for human consumption.

Bollywood is a widespread species often common in regrowth following disturbance. It occurs in lowland to highland rainforest of north east Queensland and extends south into south east Queensland. In the forest, this canopy tree can reach around 30 m.

Fruits size ranges from 12-22.5 x 10-15 mm and can be seen in clusters at the ends of or along branches from August to December. The seed is solitary and fairly easy to propagate from seed with the flesh removed and sown fresh.

Leaves are simple, entire and 5 to 21 cm long. Short pale brown or white hairs appear on the underside of leaves but are absent from the top of the leaf. New leaves are soft and often light peachy brown in colour.

Litsea leefeana is a fairly tough, easy to establish tree worthy of inclusion in tree plantings to attract birds and other native wildlife.

SEND YOUR RATS PACKING!!

Rats, both native and introduced species, are not always the most welcome visitors around farms and urban areas. In many instances they are costly pests. Rodent damage to sugar cane costs the Queensland sugar industry between \$2 and 10 million dollars each year. Local macadamia growers have also reported heavy losses due to rat damage to nut crops.

The Lake Eacham Nursery/Bureau of Sugar Experimental Station (BSES) collaborative research project on "Trees for rat control" tested the notion of manipulating available rat habitat so that the environment was unsuitable for rat pests as a place to live and breed. The two rat species in question were two native rodents common in grassy open areas, the Cane/field rat (*Rattus sordidus*) and Burton's climbing rat (*Melomys burtoni*). Weedy, grassy, non-cropping areas of sugar cane farms were planted up with trees to test out this theory. The results were striking. Twelve months after planting 100% control was achieved at one site and 80% control at the second, compared to unplanted areas.

Since then, Lake Eacham Nursery and TREAT have continued to work with the BSES and community groups planting trees and manipulating habitat in sugar cane areas. Tree planting when used in an integrated way with in-crop weed control provides a long term sustainable solution to rat problems in sugar cane. It reduces reliance on rodenticides with positive benefits for owls and other rat predators.

TREAT's Mazlin Creek project is an opportunity to test if the same principle can work in macadamia farms. Baseline rodent monitoring at the site has shown two native rodents, the cane/field rat (*Rattus sordidus*) and the white-tailed rat (*Uromys caudimaculatus*) and one imported rat, the black rat (*Rattus rattus*) are present. Data collection will continue to determine the effectiveness of trees in controlling rats in macs (nuts that is, not raincoats!)

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL EXCURSIONS

by Tania Murphy



The recent TREAT on TAP series of environmental excursions has seen primary school children from around the Tablelands visiting a range of interesting sites. Youngsters from Herberton State School were delighted by the bats at Tolga Scrub. Yungaburra students enjoyed the Malanda jungle and learned of traditional Aboriginal foods and knowledge of that fascinating piece of local rainforest.

The most recent environmental excursion involved Year 7s from Malanda State School. TREAT's Petersen Creek project was the first part of call to look at recent replanting of riparian areas along sections of the creek - many trees are now over 5 m tall at only 7 months of age! The next stop was Thurling's farm outside Malanda where Barry and Jan have been involved in large scale tree planting for over 10 years. The comparison between the two creek environments was striking. Water testing reinforced the reduced temperatures and turbidity resulting from a well established shady tree canopy.

Follow-up activities were organised with prizes being awarded for the best items of work. Jordan Cardwell's poem (below) wins the top prize for the Malanda School Year 7 excursion to Petersen and Davies creeks. Congratulations Jordan!

TREAT Poem

by Jordan Cardwell

TREAT, TREAT, how they plant thy trees,
while they look at the graceful bumble bee.
As thy birds come, as thy birds go,
they drop out their faeces so new plants may grow.
When the trees start to expand they harness the land,
so the world can be beautiful again.
So next time you see a clean creek,
remember TREAT and think of organic things.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE TRAPS

Kuranda EnviroCare

Kuranda EnviroCare have just planted the first 1000 trees in an ambitious Natural Heritage Trust funded Wildlife Corridor project. The EnviroLink wildlife Corridor is a 10 km long x 2 km wide area of land west of Kuranda which forms a natural wildlife corridor between the northern and southern sections of the World Heritage Area divided by the Barron Gorge. Trees were donated to the project by the Lake Eacham Nursery and TREAT.

Wet Tropics Tree Planting Scheme

Under the Wet Tropics Vegetation Management Program, the Scheme has been successful in gaining continuing funding for revegetation works throughout the region. Projects planned for this year range from work on the Tolga Scrub, freshwater wetlands projects around Kyambol lagoon in the Cardwell Shire, to re-establishing Fluffy Glider habitat along North Cedar Creek in the Herberton Shire and many more.

We wish the Kuranda EnviroCare and the Wet Tropics Tree Planting Scheme every success in their tree planting endeavours in the upcoming planting season. TREAT knows only too well the hard work and dedication that goes into making tree planting projects a success.

NURSERY NEWS

SOWING LIST

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August • Acacia guilaeocarpa • Acacia melanoxylon • Acacia simsi • Aleurites molluccana • Callistemon viminalis • Casuarina littoralis • Cryptocarya mackinnoniana • Cryptocarya onoprienkoana • Elaeocarpus ruminatus • Endiandra globosa • Ficus superba • Ficus virens • Helicia lamingtoniana • Helicia nortoniana • Litsea leefeana • Melaleuca viridiflora • Melaleuca vitiflora • Pittosporum sp. (40 Mile NP) • Syzygium allitiguum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September • Acronychia acidula • Dysoxylum quadrangulatum • Dysoxylum setosum • Eudodia xanthoxoloides • Lepiderma sericolignus • Litsea leefeana • Mallotus mollisimus • Mischocarpus macrocarpus • Nauclea orientalis • Syzygium cormiflorum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October • Acronychia acidula • Alphitonia petrei (seedlings) • Buckinghamia celsissima • Chionanthus ramiflorus • Cinnamomum laubati • Cryptocarya mackinnoniana • Decaspermum humile • Elaeocarpus ruminatus • Endiandra globosa • Endiandra hypotephra • Ficus pleurocarpa • Helicia nortoniana • Hicksbeachia pilosa • Litsea leefeana • Planchonella obovoidea • Prunus turneriana • Syzygium cormiflorum • Toechima erythrocarpum |
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GET READY FOR PLANTING

It's that time of year again. With the promise of a good wet, now is the time to do your site preparation ready for planting. Think about your options for weed removal - hand weeding, mulch, herbicide or a combination. Define the area you wish to plant, don't be tempted to take on more than you can handle when it comes to the follow-up site maintenance.

See us at the nursery, any Friday morning for advice on species selection and site preparation.

More Newsletters

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