



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

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TREAT Newsletter May - July 2002

TREAT 1982-2002

The years before 1980 on the Atherton Tableland saw the clearing of expanses of native rainforest and the establishment of farms and towns. White pioneers from the United Kingdom and Europe displaced the indigenous people and brought with them their own farming methods, crops and ornamental plants. Although they thought land that bore thick rainforest must be very fertile, they found after about ten years of cropping in conditions of heavy rainfall, the soil lost much of its fertility and was easily eroded.

By chance, in the early 1980's, two botanists moved to Yungaburra. They were Geoff Tracey, rainforest ecologist of the CSIRO, and Joan Wright, biology teacher and environmentalist. Geoff saw the need for forest restoration using native rainforest species of trees, but none were available to landholders.

Geoff and Joan called together a group of friends to discuss the possibility of starting an organisation dedicated to encouraging landholders to plant native trees. Tony Irvine, David Leech, Les Barnes and Bud Driver joined Geoff and Joan and James Wright in planning a public meeting to gauge support for the idea. Thirty people responded to the publicity and at a public meeting in the Yungaburra State School passed a motion to start a tree planting organisation.

Plans were laid at early meetings for members to collect seeds and grow them in their own gardens. Geoff and Tony already had their own rainforest nurseries and these plants (with help from the CSIRO) enabled some early plantings.

A name was needed and at the first field day held at Les Barnes' avocado farm bordering the Lake Eacham rainforest, Les' suggestion of 'TREAT' was discussed and adopted. (James' suggestion of 'The Arbour Board' was never seriously considered).

Peter Stanton, in charge of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in Cairns, was sympathetic to the idea of growing and planting rainforest trees and made it possible for a small tree nursery to be built of second hand materials, behind the workshop at the Lake Eacham headquarters of National Parks. Ros Robb was employed by National Parks as the first nursery person and she was responsible for helping TREAT with more trees. She also planted numbers of young trees in the picnic grounds by Lake Eacham.

Nigel Tucker followed Ros as nursery person and with his cooperation, TREAT and the nursery have developed into a fruitful dual agency for rainforest restoration. The present nursery was constructed in 1986-87 and was opened by Peter Stanton.

TREAT owes its success to some significant factors. From the beginning it has been able to call on expert advice on tree planting and landholders have been able to rely on the quality of the advice and plants they receive. A very important factor has been the support TREAT receives from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. This special mutual relationship between a community organisation and a Government Department is probably unique in Queensland (and possibly in Australia).

TREAT is apolitical and is educational in its approach. The group has attracted a large membership of able people who have been prepared to devote time and expertise to the organisation.

The group of seven planners at 'The Cycads', Yungaburra in 1982 could not have imagined what would come to the infant TREAT. Over twenty years over 500 000 rainforest trees have been grown at the nursery and planted out each wet season on dozens of projects.

The membership of TREAT topped 600 in 1997 and now averages 500. Over \$500 000 has been received in support of the work from the Federal and State Governments. An educational program, TREAT on TAP is the tree awareness program which spreads the basic idea of the importance of trees in our environment which TREAT has always propagated.

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AGM Reminder

Don't forget TREAT's AGM on Friday 23rd August at 6:30pm at the Yungaburra Community Hall.

Come and enjoy the substantial finger food and drinks to be provided by the TREAT catering committee.

TREAT Open Day - Crawford's

On Saturday 15th June 2002, a TREAT Open Day was held at the Crawford's property on Gadgarra Road, Lake Eacham.

The property is a little over 16 hectares, and when purchased in 1999 had been seriously neglected for several years. The entire block was overrun with lantana and tobacco bush, with a heavy secondary infestation of glycine or axillaria. The initial emphasis was on clearing, with the first plantings being on the slopes of wet season gullies both to stabilise the land and to improve ease of maintenance as the gullies are difficult to handle with a tractor and slasher.

The first planting of trees was carried out with the assistance of TREAT and the Lake Eacham Nursery on May 26th 2000, and these trees are doing well.

Further plantings were done, continuing down the line of the gully, in December 2000, May 2001 and April 2002. All these plantings were carried out by TREAT volunteers on Friday mornings, and their on-going assistance is very much appreciated. The trees are doing as well as can be expected in view of the lack of rain, although some in the latest planting have been hit by frost. There are other areas where direct seeding of native species has been done, and areas where natural regrowth has been supplemented with seedlings grown on the property. The ultimate objective is to restore most of the property to a planted state, leaving an area round the house for garden, orchard and grass.

There is also an experimental agro-forestry block on the property which consists of a mixed species planting of 3400 trees, planted in February 2002. These trees will be monitored to establish growth rates of various species in mixed plantings, and to provide information on the suitability of different species for agro-forestry plantations in this area.

These are all very recent plantings, but it is hoped that the visit will provide an interesting comparison with future Open Days, and encourage more wildlife friendly planting projects in the area.

The Minister for Main Roads Thanks TREAT

Travellers from Ravenshoe or Malanda to Millaa Millaa will have seen the newly upgraded East Evelyn Road. TREAT played a small part in this major project.

The Queensland Minister for Main Roads, Mr Steve Bredhauer, has thanked TREAT for helping in the operation. We attempted to make people more aware of the forest and wildlife issues involved in the upgrade and the ways in which the MRD attempted to mitigate the effects of the road. Thousands of rainforest trees have been planted and wildlife underpasses constructed.

The Minister's letter includes the sentence 'This has been a very special project and I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to TREAT for its contribution to the successful project partnership'. We have received a copy of a video made by the MRD about the upgrade and members can see it at the CTR nursery. The sub-title is 'How does a possum cross this road?'.

The MRD contributed funds which enabled TREAT and the nursery to grow the rainforest trees needed. Some trees were planted by volunteers, but the difficult terrain and weather conditions made professional CTR work necessary for the larger areas leading to the wildlife underpasses. Some of the batters must still be planted by the Wet Tropics Tree Planting Scheme which has been held up by the dry weather this year.

TREAT on TAP worked with schools at Millaa Millaa and Ravenshoe. It is encouraging to hear from car drivers who use the East Evelyn Road frequently that they have not seen so many road kills of mammals since the work was finished.

The Pelican Point Report

An account of the origin, methods and results of the TREAT Pelican Point Restoration Project is nearing completion, prepared by Noel Grundon, Joan Wright and Tony Irvine. The publication will be launched at TREAT's AGM on Friday August 23rd. It will be a scientific account of the project, illustrated with maps, plans and photographs. The Natural Heritage Trust of the Australian Government has funded the production of the book. The whole undertaking from planning to coordination and execution of the work, monitoring the results and publication is unusual in being the product of a community group.



Other scientific papers are being produced elaborating on the results of monitoring changes in the populations of birds, mammals and the flora in the course of the project. The paper on birds is being prepared by Elinor Scambler, the paper on mammals by Kay Dorricott and the paper on the flora by Tony Irvine. These papers will be published appropriate scientific journals, however summaries of these papers will be included in the present publication.

Many TREAT members have worked on the Pelican Point Restoration Project since 1991. Alan Gillanders led the first planning group which conceived the idea of planting groups of trees of different vegetation types for demonstration and recreation purposes. Grass land was left for use by Brolgas and Sarus Cranes, and also to provide income for the project by the sale of the hay. John Hall took over as the project manager and oversaw the successful acquisition of funds from the Natural Heritage Trust and the organisation of the work.

Planting was completed with cooperation with TREAT, the Lake Eacham nursery of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, the Wet Tropics Tree Planting Scheme and the Queensland Forestry Service. Maintenance of the tree blocks has been helped by several individuals and community groups, cooperating in the 'Adopt-a-Plot' Scheme.

Several Arbor Day celebrations for school students were held in the early days when the Department of Natural Resources carried out maintenance. Many bird watching groups visit Pelican Point to experience its rich avifauna. Locals enjoy using the walking tracks, enjoying the environment and meeting wallabies and pelicans. A TREAT member keeps the tracks mown.

Sunwater now controls the water in Lake Tinaroo which includes the flood margin land and therefore Pelican Point. It is hoped that the project area will continue to be a place which is peaceful, beautiful and interesting, and that the continuing development of the restored plant communities will provide material for scientific research.

The Pelican Point Revegetation publication is available as a PDF document from the publications page of this website.

Nursery News

Seed Collector's Diary

The huge flowering of the Red Tulip Oaks (*Argyrodendron peralatum* and *Argyrodendron* sp. Boonjie) can still be seen across the Tableland, with the bronzed winged fruits forming on some trees. Other notable flowering were Grey Bollywood (*Neolitsea dealbata*), Silver Ash (*Flindersia bourjotiana*), Guoia (*Guoia acutifolia*), White Hazelwood (*Symplocos cochinchinensis*) and more recently the beautiful red flowers of the Pink Silky Oak (*Alloxylon flammum*). This beautiful tree is the floral emblem of the Eacham Shire.

Rose Silky Oak (*Darlingia ferruginea*) another Proteaceae also gave a lovely showing with its creamy white spiked flowers contrasting against its warm brown hairy lobed leaves.

Good collections of fruit were made for May, June and July. The Broad Leaf Lilly Pilly (*Acmena hemilampra*) had good fruiting and the seeds are now germinating successfully in the seedling room. They will go back to our coastal plantings along with lots of laurels and Kuranda Satinash (*Syzygium kuranda*).

Some of the Tableland's fruit collections were Little Evodia (*Melicope rubra*), Alectryon (*Alectryon seminerveus*), Black Bean (*Castanospermum australe*), Lemon Aspen (*Acronychia acidula*), Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii*), *Ficus racemosa*, *F. septica* and Norton's Oak (*Helicia nortoniana*). Good collections of a favourite bird tree, Bollywood (*Litsea lefeana*) were made on the coast in July and we are now waiting for Tableland Litsea to ripen.

If you know of any trees fruiting in your area or have any questions please contact our seed collector Helen McConnell at the CTR nursery on 4095 3406.

Staff Changes

We welcome Tania back from extended long service leave, looking refreshed from 6 months on Cape York. Congratulations to Geoff Onus who will be working for the next 12 months as part of the Commonwealth Employment Initiative Training project. Geoff will be team leader of 10 youth workers involved in National Parks walking track development, park maintenance and restoration activities. We'll miss you Geoff. We welcome Mr Darren Caulfield, Geoff's replacement. Nigel will now be on some well earned extended leave until around September holidaying in the Solomon's no less. We're envious and will welcome back a well tanned and rested team leader upon his return.

Students and Volunteers

CTR recently hosted 3 students studying Landscape Studies from Nurlingen University in Germany. Another German student will be with us for around a month commencing in August. We welcome Yoshiko Tagashashi from Japan. Yoshiko viewed a documentary recently filmed in Australia about TREAT's work and was so impressed she wanted to take a closer look and be a part of the action. Yoshiko will be with us at least a month.

Work Schedule

This period of the year has seen the completion of our coastal plantings. The cooler weather slows the growth of weeds and is a good time for our field crew to catch up on maintenance across our 20 odd project sites! No mean feat and we commend our field staff for their diligence and commitment to this often tough job. Recent frost events have taken their toll on some of our younger plantings. We will allow a couple more weeks to determine survival rates (and perhaps more frost events) before we assess the full extent of damage and plan for replanting. Frost events provide a good opportunity for us to determine frost susceptibility / tolerance and increase our knowledge regarding this phenomenon.

Fortunately the last couple of weeks have been relatively frost free. We are currently reviewing and finalising planting schedules/ projects upcoming planting/ wet season. Anyone interested in hosting a TREAT Friday morning planting on their property should contact CTR to register their interest. That's where you do the site preparation and maintenance and we provide the trees and happy volunteer tree planters to plant trees on your place!

Caring for Country / Helping to Heal Country Program - (Part 1)

Hello! My name is Syb Bressolin. I am one of the indigenous (Cultural) rangers that work at the CTR nursery. When I look back over the journey that the Caring for Country/ Helping to Heal Country Program has taken, its hard to believe just how far it has traveled, from the birth of it until now.

Warren Canendo (a Ndjjon man) and myself, (a Dulgulburra Yidinji woman), had first walked through the gates of the nursery in 1999. We came in as Horticultural Certificate III trainees for twelve months. Since then Keith Barlow (a Ndjjon man) has also completed his traineeship and this year Philip Anning (a Yidinji man) is in the process of doing his.

Throughout our training, Warren and myself started to observe that there were a small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people visiting the nursery. As the nursery is involved in restoring country we felt that it was important for the indigenous community to become aware of the range of skills we were learning and we wanted to share it with them.

Approximately 7 months into the traineeship, I invited my past trainers for the Caring for Country Unit at the Cairns TAFE. This led to the formation of the program. In the year 2000 four staff members, including Warkentin and myself completed a Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training.

Since this program began it has continued to go from strength to strength. I will write about this next newsletter.

Twenty Eight Years of Revegetation in a formerly Mabi Forest Area

Tony & Helen Irvine's Field Day

On a typical grey suggesting-drizzle day on 20th July, in 31 cars and on two motor bikes, turned up for the occasion. I caddy, "Yes" said Helen, "Just dress for Melbourne's winter weather." Despite this dampening effect on spirits, more than 50 people, in 31 cars and on two motor bikes, turned up for the occasion. My caddy's visitors in my usual weather-defying T shirt and shorts whilst they stood around me in their overclad woolies.

I began with telling them how growing up in a dilapidated condemned home with a postage-stamp sized yard, in an industrial slum area of Richmond (Melbourne), made me yearn for open outdoor areas with lots of bush. When I finished grade 6 at the primary State School I had to go across the Yarra River to Toorak Central School. I would sometimes walk the 4 - 5 km to school and would wend my way through the Toorak mansions with 100 m frontages, lots of trees and shrubs and manicured lawns. I wished then that someday I might live on a piece of land of sufficient size to be surrounded by lots of trees and shrubs. When I came to Atherton, I bought my current block and began to put my dream into action.

I initially aimed to have an open forest area, a rain forest area and a home orchard growing as many north Queensland species as possible on the land. Gradually with more experience the planted rain forest species became those that grew in the former Mabi Forest (Type 5b) or in drier Monsoon Vine Forests as many of the wetter rain forest species would succumb in the October Dry or extended dry periods whereas the local species did not require tender loving care and watering after planting in the wet season. Prior to planting the area was dominated by three varieties of Guinea Grass (*Panicum maximum*), Kikuyu (*Pennisetum clandestinum*), Wild Tobacco (*Solanum mauritanium*), Lantana (*Lantana camara*), Duranta (*Duranta repens*) and Japanese Sunflower (*Tithonia diversifolia*).

Initially, I introduced the group to our boardwalk which was neatly hidden from view by some of my trees and shrubs, one of which *Maniltoa laticellata* (Cascading Manilla) drew some admiration. The boardwalk is 50 m long as well as a small 6 m long bridge over the creek bed. Materials consisted of zinc-alume purlins, galvanised steel hand rails and fittings, nuts and bolts, screws, cement, gravel, sand and boards of Bellan or Bornean Ironwood (*Eusideroxylon zwageri* - Lauraceae). The walk initially goes over a cattle dip converted to a fish pond and then winds through a densely planted area of Australian native palms (*Archontophoenix, Arenga, Calamus, Carpentaria, Hydrastele, Laccospadix, Licuala, Liospadix, Livistona, Normanbya, Ptychosperma* and *Wodyetia*), pandanus species, cycads (*Lepidozamia, Bowenia*), gingers, ferns and some trees such as *Syzygium fibrosum, S. luehmannii, Uromyrtus metrosideros, Fagraea fagraeacea, Dysosyllum muelleri, Ficus congesta, Neolitsea dealbata*. With the fallen pandanus leaves and palm fronds left in situ, the effect of this area is of a natural palm/ pandanus swamp.

We then walked down the cement steps and across boat-shaped stepping stones into the creek which arises directly from Hallorans Hill about 1 km away. The creek can be dry or flowing for ten months of the year. Currently it is dry. Initially before any plantings the creek was dominated by Para Grass (*Bracharia mutica*), Guinea Grass, Lantana and Wild Tobacco, with a small cluster of rain forest trees dominated by *Melolotus philippinensis* (Philippine Kamala). The conversion has resulted in clusters of Australian native palms, *Metaleuca leucadendra* (White Paperbark), *Tristanopsis exiliiflora* (Kanuka Box), *Xanthostemon chrysanthus* (River Penda) and *Syzygium tierneyanum* (Bamaga Satinash) along the waterline. The slopes of the creek bank have been planted with a variety of rain forest and eucalypt species. *Eucalyptus grandis* has produced some sizeable individuals. In the creek valley there is an impressive *Ficus variegata* (Variegated Fig) and two large Burr Flower trees (*Anthocephalus chinensis*). The group saw the sharp contrast at our boundary edge, on the creek system where the before and after scene could be immediately observed.

Other areas of the property were shown, including a rain forest planting with some vines becoming noticeable, a home orchard area and a planting of some commercial species with and without cover trees at the far end of the block as well as another very steep bank of the creek which was only revegetated with Mabi forest species. Helen did a great job with offers of tea, coffee, cordial, water and some tasty bikkies to our visitors. I think everyone left in much warmer spirits.

The Impact of the Fruit of the Month

by Tony Irvine

"Klunpeeowping!" sounded Sam Mcoy's axe as it bounced off the tree he was trying to cut down. "Holy hell" he uttered, "My axe must be blunt." He immediately drew out his axe honing stone and proceeded to touch up the head. He faced up to the tree again. Klunkeek went the axe as it bit slightly into the trunk. "Gee, I better get the chainsaw onto this fella," Sam uttered. As he looked at the tree, the devious side of Sam's nature came into play and he thought, "Hmm, if I swap logs of this tree for the Candlenut logs in Jimmy Denton's pile at the Malanda and Atherton Show Woodchops, I could become the champion woodcutter on Tablelands." After felling the tree, Sam placed some logs in the back of his ute, aiming to put his plan into action. On his way out of the forest Sam met two Aboriginal and Betty, a Yidinji Aboriginal and Betty, a Ngajonji Aboriginal. "Ah" said Danny you've got some 'waygan' in the back. "He might call it 'waygan' but we call it 'Jidu' Betty uttered. "Oh! So this Jitta," said Sam giving the timber its English Common Name which was obviously taken from the Ngajon language name. "It's the heaviest timber in the rainforest," said Danny. "When I was working in forestry they told me it was as heavy as 1105 kg per cubic metre, but my people knew it was just bloody heavy." "It is also very hard" Betty said, and the hardness gives singing sticks (*wugulu*) a good sound and makes the wood suitable for swords, spear points, woomera pegs, large fighting boomerangs (*Jubu* sticks), fish hooks and knives. "The wood is also very oily and can even burn in the green stage" said Danny. "We used to cut sticks and tie them together in a bundle, light them and use them as a torch to find animals at night. "The forest fellows reckon because the wood is tough and flexible, it is used to make fishing rods." "The tree fruits between June and September" said Betty "and it is one of the few fruits available in winter time on the Tablelands and hills, suitable for the cassowary to feed on. It helps to prevent the cassowary starving in winter, up here." "Pigeons, particularly the Wompo Pigeon love the fruit also" said Danny, eager not to be outdone about the tree's ecology.

Sam farewelled his friends and on the day of the woodchops put his plan into action. He lived home in the content and became the Tablelands Champion Woodchopper. Poor Jimmy Denton who had held the title for years, immediately retired. He had never performed so poorly in his life, coming last and hardly making an impression on his blocks of wood in front of everyone. And all of the above was due to a tiny black seed about 2mm long, which occurred in one of four cells contained within a hard layer (endocarp) surrounded by yellowish and an outer maroon to red covered skin of a squarish fruit, about 12 mm long x 12 mm wide. Known scientifically as *Hallfordia scleroxyla*, family Rutaceae (orange and lemon family). It can have up to four black seeds. The leaves are glossy green, simple, alternate or whorled and crowded towards the end of the twigs and have a strong odour when crushed. The tree is known only in rain forests of the Wet Tropics Region up to Mclwraith Range (Cape York Peninsula) and ranges in altitude from 500 to 1300 m a.s.l. It occurs predominantly in Simple Notohyll Vine Forests (Type 8) which occur on granitic, rhyolitic and metamorphic sites, but also at higher elevations in Simple Microhyll Vine Fern Forests (type 9) and has scattered individuals on the wet to very wet basalts in Complex Mesophyll and Notohyll Vine Forests (type 1 b and 5a). It is suitable for revegetation in areas on the Tableland formerly occupied by these forest types.

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