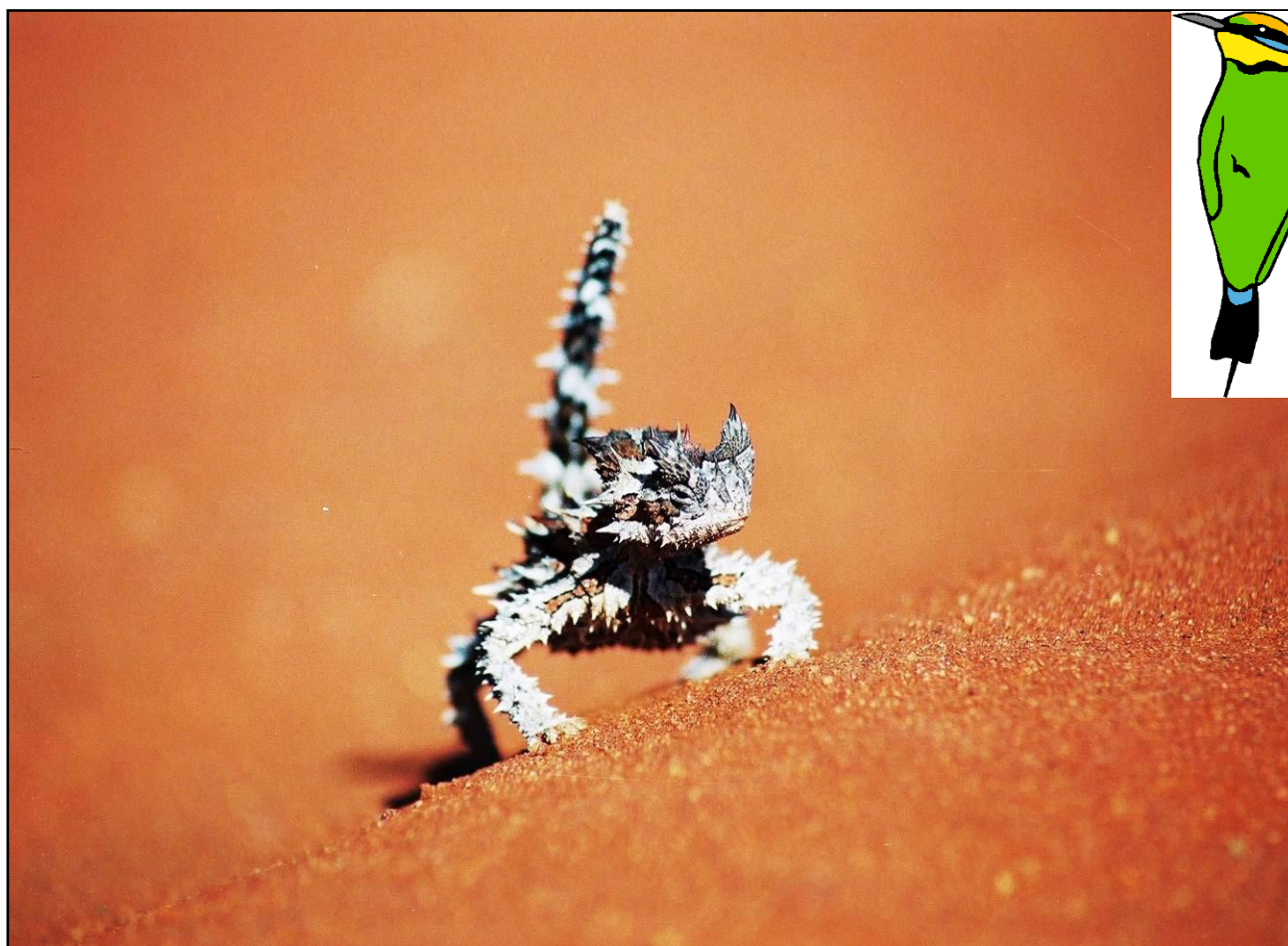
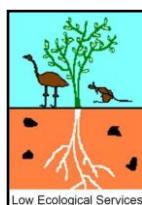


# GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

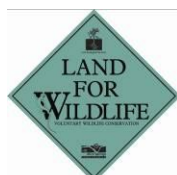


## Newsletter – August 2011

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Low Ecological Services



### On our cover this month...

Most Centralians would be familiar with our August cover – the Thorny Devil (*Moloch horridus*). These beautiful and unique arid zone reptiles are well known for their gentle nature and ant-eating habits. This fellow was snapped in sand dune country south of Alice Springs. With a few days of warm weather over recent weeks, lizards of all shapes and sizes are again becoming a feature of people's backyard wildlife.

## Garden for Wildlife News

### New Resource Management Plan Launched

On Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> August, the new NT Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan was launched in Alice Springs.

Prepared by Territory Natural Resource Management, the new 2010 – 2015 plan aims to;

- Guide investments and activities in Natural Resource Management in the NT
- Encourage greater involvement in NRM in the Territory
- Identify opportunities for new partnerships
- Direct future NRM policies and priorities of the NT and Australian Governments and
- Encourage increased funding into NRM in the Territory.

Unlike the previous plan, the newly released version has a regional focus, with regional action plans developed for the four regions of the Territory, Top End, Gulf Savannah, Table Lands and the Arid Lands. These regional Action Plans identify key NRM issues/priorities and outline actions by which to address these. Priorities for NRM have been developed through extensive consultation with NRM groups and the general public in each region.

The plan can be reviewed through various interactive tools or by downloading the complete document from the Territory Natural Resource Management web site [www.territorynrm.org.au](http://www.territorynrm.org.au).

Alternatively, you can contact TNRM Arid Lands Regional Coordinator, Heidi Groffen on 8951 9284.

### 2011 Eco Fair

All the action was at Olive Pink Botanic Gardens from the 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> August for the annual DesertSmart Eco Fair. The weekend saw many Alice Springs NRM and community groups participating by holding stalls or workshops over the three days.

Land for Wildlife again operated an information stand and it was great to see many of our members out and about and have the opportunity to catch up. The Garden for Wildlife program prospered on the day, with 12 new members signing up over the Saturday and Sunday.

Thanks should go to Jimmy Cocking and the crews from ALEC and OPBG, who were responsible for the organisation of a great weekend.

## Articles

### The Changing Status of NT Wildlife – Your Chance to Comment

All wildlife and plant species in the NT are currently categorised according to their status by both Federal and NT governments. There are many factors that influence what category a species is listed as, including population size and trends, distribution and threatening processes.

The NT is the only Australian state that uses similar guidelines as the IUCN for listing species and these include threatened and non-threatened categories. Categories include:

Non-threatened	
NE	Not Evaluated – Status has not been assessed
DD	Data Deficient – not enough data to classify as a threatened species
LC	Least Concern
NT	Near Threatened
Threatened	
VU	Vulnerable
EN	Endangered
CR	Critically Endangered
EW	Extinct in the Wild
EX	Extinct



The Australian Bustard – one species whose status is under review. Photo: Dave Price.

Every five years, the status of NT species are reassessed and potentially changed from one category to another. The NT NRETAS (formerly Parks and Wildlife) Biodiversity Section, under the direction of Simon Ward here in Alice Springs, is currently in the review process.

A number of changes to the list of threatened species have been proposed, including several central Australian species. These changes include the downgrading of the Emu from VU to NT and the Australian Bustard from VU to LC. A full list of proposed changes can be viewed on the NRETAS web site [www.nt.gov.au/nreta](http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta)

Before these proposed changes can become permanent, a public consultation process must be carried out. There are several reasons for this, including the opportunity to gather further data on species that researchers may have overlooked, such as wildlife observations made by community members over time.

You are currently invited to make submissions regarding changes to the NT threatened species list. If you would like to do so, visit the NRETAS web site and follow the links to Proposed Changes to the NT Threatened Species List. The public has until the 9<sup>th</sup> of September to make submissions. [www.nt.gov.au/nreta](http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta)

## Confusing Coolabahs

The taxonomy of eucalypts is indeed a confusing and continually changing science. From what was, not long ago, a single genus, we now have a complicated assemblage of 7 genera; *Eucalyptus*, *Corymbia* (represented by Bloodwoods and Ghost Gums in the Centre) *Angophora*, *Arillastrum*, *Allosyncarpia*, *Eucalyptosis* and *Stockwellia*.

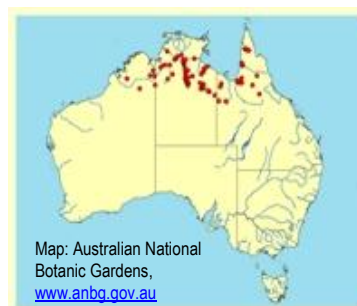
Division between the 700 - 800 species is also complicated, with single species being split based on genetic research or, in some cases, several species being united. One such complicated assemblage of species is the three (or four, or six!) *Eucalyptus* generally referred to as Coolabahs, or Bastard Coolabahs, or various other common names.

### ***E. microtheca* – Northern Coolabah**

Until recently, all trees referred to as Coolabah were considered to belong to this species. The species was thought to be widespread across inland Australia and included both rough and smooth barked trees with various leaf, floral and habit variations.

The species has since been divided into as many as 5 new species, with the name *E. microtheca* applying to a species found from northern NT to Cape York, with an isolated occurrence in north east SA. It grows along watercourses and in seasonally inundated swamps and wetlands.

The distinguishing characteristics of *E. microtheca* are the flaky, fibrous, grey bark from the trunk to the tips of the branches (picture above) and the small fruit size. Also its distribution – you are unlikely to see this species in the wild around Alice Springs!



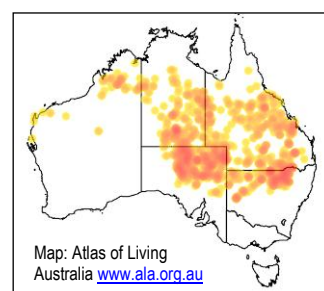
Map: Australian National Botanic Gardens,  
[www.anbg.gov.au](http://www.anbg.gov.au)

Rough bark of *E. microtheca*



### ***E. coolabah* – Coolabah**

This is a small to medium sized tree that grows on seasonally flooded areas along river floodouts and inland swamps, often on saline soils.



*E. coolabah*. A large tree, left and blossoms, right.

You can see this species around Alice Springs in places such as St Mary's Creek, where some quite large examples occur, and also in swamps alongside the Palmer River at the Stuart Highway crossing. Characterised by rough grey-brown bark on most of the trunk and the base of large branches, smaller branches are smooth and white barked.

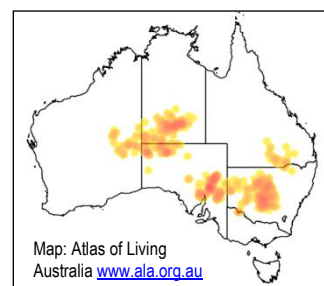
Flowers and fruit occur in groups of 3-7 and are small, being about 5mm long.

In low lying, saline and temporarily water logged soils, these trees can become the dominant upper storey species in woodland communities.

### ***E. intertexta* – Bastard Coolabah**

This small to medium sized tree rarely exceeds 20m in height. Rough, grey-brown bark is usually persistent only on the lower part of the trunk, the upper trunk and branches being smooth and white or greyish – although this is variable.

These trees can occur in similar areas to *E. Coolabah*, although in less waterlogged soils. A well-known woodland of this species occurs in Ilparpa Swamp, where some large, old examples occur. This tree also grows in valleys and gorges of the central ranges.



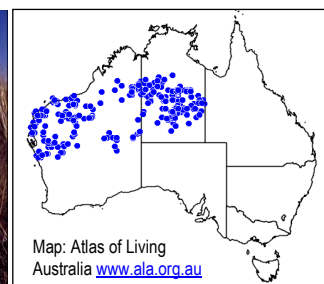
*E. intertexta*. Photo: Brooker & Kleinig [Australian Plant Image Index](http://www.australianplantimageindex.org)

The fruit is larger than that of *E. coolabah*, being about 7mm long. Fruits open in 4 – 5 valves to release the seeds, as opposed to the 3-valved fruits of Coolabah. Other noted examples are at the bend in Larapinta Rd on the west side of the Rail line east of Hong St. Traditional owner approval to remove a huge tree is commemorated by the plaque mounted at the corner and all the young trees result from seeds taken from the mother tree for germination.

### ***E. victrix* – Smooth Barked Coolabah**

Smooth Barked Coolabah occurs in areas north of Alice Springs in the Tanami Desert region. It is usually confined to floodplains and creek lines.

The fruit, flowers and foliage of this species are similar to its relative *E. Coolabah*, however it's smooth, white, powdery bark is distinctive. In fact, you're more likely to mistake this tree for a Ghost Gum (*Corymbia apparrerinja*) than more closely related trees.



The smooth trunk of *E. victrix*. Photo Connors, J.R. [Australian Plant Image Index](http://www.anbg.gov.au)

And just to confuse things further, look out for these two species if you're travelling around the Barklys north of Alice Springs:

### ***E barklyensis***

A small tree with smooth bark on the smaller branches.

### ***E. cyanoclada***

Rough bark on all branches; bluish leaves, buds & fruits.

This article's caused a stir around the office, prompting quite a debate as to the differences between these species. If you have anything to add to the conversation, send us an email!!

#### **References**

- *Australian Plant Image Index*. (2010). Retrieved August 2011, from Australian National Botanic Gardens: [www.anbg.gov.au](http://www.anbg.gov.au)
- *Atlas of Living Australia*. (2011). Retrieved August 2011, from Atlas of Living Australia: <http://www.ala.org.au>
- Brooker & Kleinig. (1994). *Field Guide to Eucalypts Vol III, Northern Australia*. Chatswood: Inkata Press.
- Moore, P. (2005). *A Guide to Plants of Inland Australia*. Sydney: Reed New Holland.

Thanks also to Jenny Purdie, author of *Plants of the Barkly Region*, and Emma Lewis, researcher at the School of Botany, University of Melbourne, for their help with this article.

## **Workshops & Announcements**

### **Schools @ the Eco Fair**

As part of our Eco Fair presence, Land for Wildlife took part in the Schools day, held as part of the fair on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August.

Various environmental groups from Alice Springs, including the Desert Park, Alice Solar City and others conducted 40 minute workshops for school classes throughout the morning.

Our Land for Wildlife workshop covered the topics of habitats and biodiversity. In all, four classes participated, with groups from year 6 – 9 taking part in a 'biodiversity survey' of the gardens.

## Biodiversity Surveys



This year's Biodiversity survey is scheduled to take place over two weeks in October. Properties in the area of Honeymoon Gap and Roe Creek have been targeted, with four property owners having agreed to participate.

All members (and interested non-members!) are invited to take part as volunteers in animal trapping, vegetation surveying and bird watching activities that will be carried out during the field component of the project.



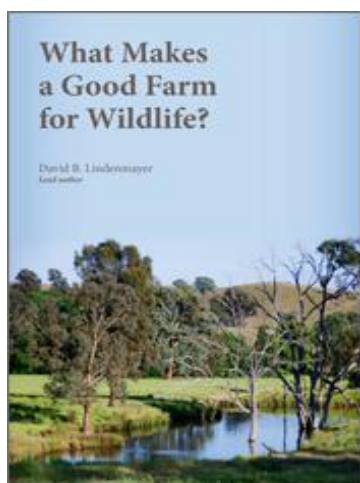
Two properties will be surveyed over three trapping nights from the 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October and a further two properties from 23<sup>rd</sup> -26<sup>th</sup>.

This will be a fantastic opportunity to learn some new skills in surveying techniques and flora and fauna identification - skills that can be applied to your own property to assess the success of your management activities. No previous experience is necessary.

Please contact Jesse or Chris at LfW/GfW to volunteer.

Left: Images from the 2010 Biodiversity Survey

## Recommended Books



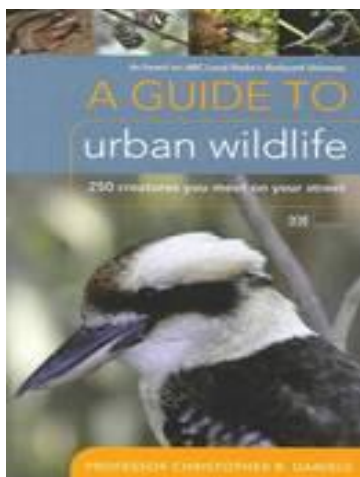
### What Makes a Good Farm for Wildlife

David B Lindenmayer

CSIRO Publishing

Based on 13 years of research, this book includes information on vertebrates and invertebrates on farms and their relationships with significant vegetation and environmental assets: woodland remnants, plantings, paddocks, rocky outcrops and waterways.

It is a useful resource for landholders, hobby farmers, vineyard owners, naturalists interested in birds and other native animals.



## A Guide to Urban Wildlife -

### 250 Creatures you meet on the Street

**Christopher B. Daniels**

In every Australian suburban street there is a secret world; a world seen but not really understood, of animals that live alongside us. Professor Christopher B. Daniels introduces you to 250 creatures that live on your street, in your backyard, in the air, at your local beach or even in your house, and takes you on a tour of their world, a world increasingly affected by its interaction with its human neighbours. In this fascinating book, you will learn how to recognise the animals you live among, and learn of their behaviours, communication, eating habits and peculiarities. Beautifully illustrated with full-colour photography, this book is the essential guide for any nature lover, or anyone who wants to learn more about the world around them.

## Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Details
1/9/2011 – 16/10/2011	Annual Tiwest Nightstalk	<a href="http://www.perthzoo.wa.gov.au/act/tiwest-night-stalk/">http://www.perthzoo.wa.gov.au/act/tiwest-night-stalk/</a>
1/10/2011 – 8/10/2011	Red Centre Birdweek	<a href="http://www.alicespringsdesertpark.com.au/plan/events.shtml">http://www.alicespringsdesertpark.com.au/plan/events.shtml</a>
9/10/2011 – 12/10/2011	2011 Land for Wildlife biodiversity surveys.	Land for Wildlife. 89 555 222 <a href="mailto:lfw@lowecol.com.au">lfw@lowecol.com.au</a>
23/10/2011 – 26/10/2011	2011 Land for Wildlife biodiversity surveys	Land for Wildlife. 89 555 222 <a href="mailto:lfw@lowecol.com.au">lfw@lowecol.com.au</a>
29/10/2011	Alice Springs Field Naturalists quarterly wader count at Alice Springs Sewage Ponds.	



Take care,

Chris, Jesse & Bill



Garden for Wildlife Coordinators

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