

LAND FOR WILDLIFE



& GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE



Land for Wildlife and Garden for Wildlife

Central Australia Newsletter

March 2018

From the Land for Wildlife Coordinator

We are back in the red lands and refreshed from our adventures abroad! I hope that the hottest central Australian summer on record hasn't been wearing too thin and your plants are surviving.

If you have been receiving our newsletter but haven't yet signed up as a member yet (and are interested in doing so), get in touch and we can arrange an assessment over the next couple of months as the weather cools.

We are now heading into the cooler weather and therefore the stalls will become more active. You may see us out and about at events with our stall—feel free to pop over and say hi to update us on your Land for Wildlife property or change any contact details.

Furthermore, if there are any flora/fauna/ecology topics that you want to learn more about, get in touch and we can add the suggestions to our newsletter ideas list.



An Indian Sundew (*Drosera indica*) at Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary, slowly taking over a small butterfly. The fight for life was very real but also very much in slow motion!

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Website Upgrade Has Land for Wildlife Looking Flash!

The Land for Wildlife and Garden for Wildlife Central Australia website (wildlife.lowecol.com.au) has been undergoing some renovations of late and the new look has finally been released!

The new website includes a hot topic slider on the main page to grab the interest of visitors regarding some key aspects of the program. This will be kept updated as new fact sheets and areas of interest arise (see example top right).



The layout has been modified so that the convoluted system of sub-pages has been simplified and a drop-down menu is now available to help you easily navigate the pages (middle right).

Within the main header pages, there are also eye-grabbing images to help you find the key topics that double as menu buttons.

As always, there is a range of great pages to browse, including information about our recent and ongoing [Projects](#), a wealth of information under [Resources](#) (Fact sheets, Vegetation Maps, Networks etc), and you can find the [Blog](#) and [Newsletters](#) on the website as well.


One of the major upgrades that has occurred is that the website is now mobile friendly! This means that you can browse the website when you are on the go from your smart phone or tablet with ease, as the text and images will realign appropriately. This means that the fact sheets are more portable as well, increasing your ability to learn about the wonderful world of wildlife on the fly.


Check out the new page and let us know any feedback that you may have so that we can continue to improve our web services.





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Do you want to learn more about the historical and cultural background of trees in the NT?
Browse the NT Register of Significant Trees interactive map and view fact sheets, or nominate your own!



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Resources

Land for Wildlife prides itself on providing members with the required to manage a patch of land for wildlife habitat conservation. You can find a range of fact sheets below, as well as links to identify and contacts within our [Network](#).

Looking for information and can't find it? Get in touch with us and see what other resources we may be able to provide!

[Native Fauna](#)

[Feral Animals](#)

[Domestic Pets](#)

[Native Plants and Gardening](#)

[Weeds and Pests](#)

[Soil](#)

[Water](#)

[Fire](#)

[Vegetation Maps](#)


[Books For Sale](#)

[Networks](#)


[Newsletter Archives](#)

Projects

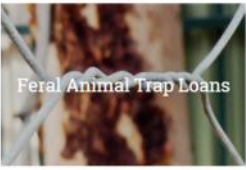
Land for Wildlife and Garden for Wildlife are active in the community, hosting a range of projects in the environmental conservation arena, with funding from local and national organisations. Head to the linked pages to read more!




Significant Trees Register




Biodiversity Surveys



Feral Animal Trap Loans



Domestic Cat Monitoring and Awareness in Alice Springs



Central Australian Grass Identification Guide

View the [Land for Wildlife and Garden for Wildlife website](#) in its upgraded form! [Link](#)▶

The Website was designed and upgraded by [Skink](#).

Australian Heritage Festival 2018

My Culture, My Story – Celebrating the diversity of cultures that have shaped our shared heritage

The Australian Government and the National Trust present

Voices from the Past: Significant Trees of the CBD

Wednesday 18 April 2018, 2-3 PM
Meet at Hartley Street School

Land for Wildlife's Candice Appleby will lead a 2 km loop tour of the significant trees in the Alice Springs CBD. View the trees and learn why they were registered, as well as the categories of significance.

Ida Standley next to a Date Palm, now a registered significant tree. Image courtesy of the Library of South Australia. Photo Jack Laver (1922).

A Snippet From Significant Trees

» *Galamarrma: The Tree of Knowledge*

The Galamarrma (the Tree of Knowledge) is a Banyan (*Ficus virens*) of cultural, social and historical importance listed in the Darwin NT Register of Significant Trees. Believed to be between 200 and 300 years old, this ancient tree is culturally significant to the Larrakia Aboriginal people who know it as "Galamarrma".

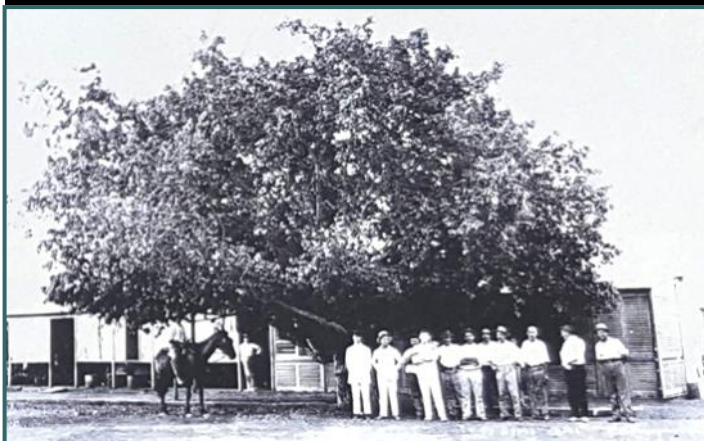
The tree is located on the site of the old Terminus Hotel in Darwin's old Chinatown and was used as a meeting place, postal address and community notice board. It was also a place where Chinese youth met with and learned from their elders and where wisdom was gained in its shade. The Terminus Hotel was progressively demolished following its closure in 1931 and in 1969 community pressure saw the plans for the new Civic Centre altered by three meters to accommodate the significant part of Darwin's history and heritage. In 1994 it was accepted into the NT Heritage Register, protecting it under the Heritage Conservation Act.

Galamarrma has survived to remind us of our past, despite being subjected to several destructive cyclones (including Tracy in 1974) and World War II (when Chinatown was destroyed by fire).

View the [NT Register of Significant Trees](#) page to learn more about the register. *The NT Register of Significant Trees was established by the National Trust NT and Greening Australia and is managed by Land for Wildlife Central Australia.*



Left: The Tree of Knowledge outside the Terminus Hotel with patrons, c. 1915 (Image Ted Ryko).
Right: The Tree of Knowledge as it stands today outside the Darwin Civic Centre.



Spidentify the Arachnids in Your Garden or Home

A new App has been developed by Minibeast Wildlife for smart phones as a resource for identifying spiders in Australia. The App is available on [Google Play](#) and the [App Store](#).

The App comes at a small cost of \$4.49 but includes more than 250 species with high resolution photographs and a step-by-step identification tool to help you identify individuals.

Read more about the App at the [Spidentify](#) website.



Erodium Are Fun... Hear Us Out!

Heron's Bill, Crowfoot, Cranebill, Storkbill. Call them what you like! I'm talking about the fun *Erodium* genus. Herbs in the genus *Erodium* (Greek: erodiós or ερωδιός, meaning Heron), have fruit that resemble long bird beaks (hence the name). They are closely related to the *Geranium* (Greek: geranós or γερανός, meaning Crane) genus and the *Pelargonium* (Greek: pelargós or πελαργός, meaning Stork) genus.

There are roughly 60 species of *Erodium*, though only a few can be found locally. [Erodium angustilobum](#), [E. aureum](#), [E. carolinianum](#), [E. crinitum](#) and [E. cygnorum](#) are native to the NT and can be found around Alice Springs, whereas *E. botrys* and *E. cicutarium* are both introduced species. The introduced species can be distinguished from other native *Erodium* species in central Australia by either a lack of glandular hairs on the basal stems (*E. botrys*) or compound leaves (*E. cicutarium*). You can read more about the individual species by clicking the links above, which will redirect you to the detailed pages at Flora NT. The plants are supposedly edible and have a flavour similar to parsley when young.

'But why are they so fun?' I hear you ask! It all begins with the birds and the bees (as the old story goes). Then, once the flowers are pollinated, the fruit (schizocarp) will be produced containing five sections (carpels). Each of the carpels contains a spiral seed, which can be up to 6 cm long, with a swollen arrow-like mericarp at one end containing the embryo and a slender spiralling beak (style or awn). This beak is why the *Erodium* have my attention.

Firstly, the curling of the beak enables the seed to use ballistic dispersal to be launched half a meter away from the parent plant on maturity to facilitate dispersal. Once the seed has landed the beak can uncoil and coil again, which generates thrust to burrow the seed into the soil for successful germination.

The beak is able to coil and uncoil because it is hygroscopically active, which means that it absorbs moisture from the air (responding to ambient humidity). This moisture causes the beak to elongate or unwind and the *Erodium* spins in response, turning clockwise when wet and counter-clockwise when recoiling as it dries. The beak is also able to catch strong wind gusts which can help to spin it for self-burial of the mericarp. You can watch a great [video of the coiling and uncoiling on YouTube](#). Now that, my Land for Wildlife friends, is fun – right?!

Read more about the mechanics of the hygroscopic seeds of *Erodium* in a research paper by Evangelista, D., Hotton, S., Dumais, J. (2011). [The mechanics of explosive dispersal and self-burial in the seeds of the filaree, *Erodium cicutarium* \(Geraniaceae\).](#) *The Journal of Experimental Biology* 214, 521-529. DOI: 10.1242/jeb.050567



L to R:
Erodium
flower and
leaves, fruit
on the plant
prior to
dehiscence,
seeds with
curled beaks
(Seed image:
SA Seed
Conservation
Centre).

A Walk IN THE Park 2018

Want to go bushwalking and not sure where to start?

Join Parks and Wildlife for an introduction to bushwalking along some of the short walks in Central Australia.

Cassia Hill Simpsons Gap

Wednesday 4 April (pm)
& Saturday 7 April (am)

1.8 km loop, a steep climb but easy track, amazing views of the MacDonnell Ranges.

Level: *Easy*

Meet: *Cassia Hill car park*

Stuart Hill Walk Telegraph Station

Wednesday 9 May (pm)
& Saturday 12 May (am)

4 km loop, meandering along rocky country and returning via Spencer's Hill track and the Todd River.

Level: *Easy*

Meet: *Picnic area*

Hat Hill Saddle Simpsons Gap

Wednesday 6 June (pm)
& Saturday 23 June (am)

4.2 km return steady climb along a part of Section 1 of the Larapinta Trail.

Level: *Moderate*

Meet: *BBQ area, Simpsons Gap*

Woodland Trail Simpsons Gap

Wednesday 27 June (pm)

5 km return, a longer walk through the Mulga, discover woodland birds.

Level: *Easy*

Meet: *Woodland car park*

Chain of Ponds Trephina Gorge

Sunday 29 July (am)

3.5 km loop, a more remote and challenging walk involving some rock scrambling and climbing. 4WD access req.

Level: *Difficult*

Meet: *John Hayes Rockhole*

Pound Walk Ormiston Gorge

Sunday 12 August (am)

8.5 km loop, a more remote and challenging walk, offering panoramic views of the Pound.

Level: *Moderate*

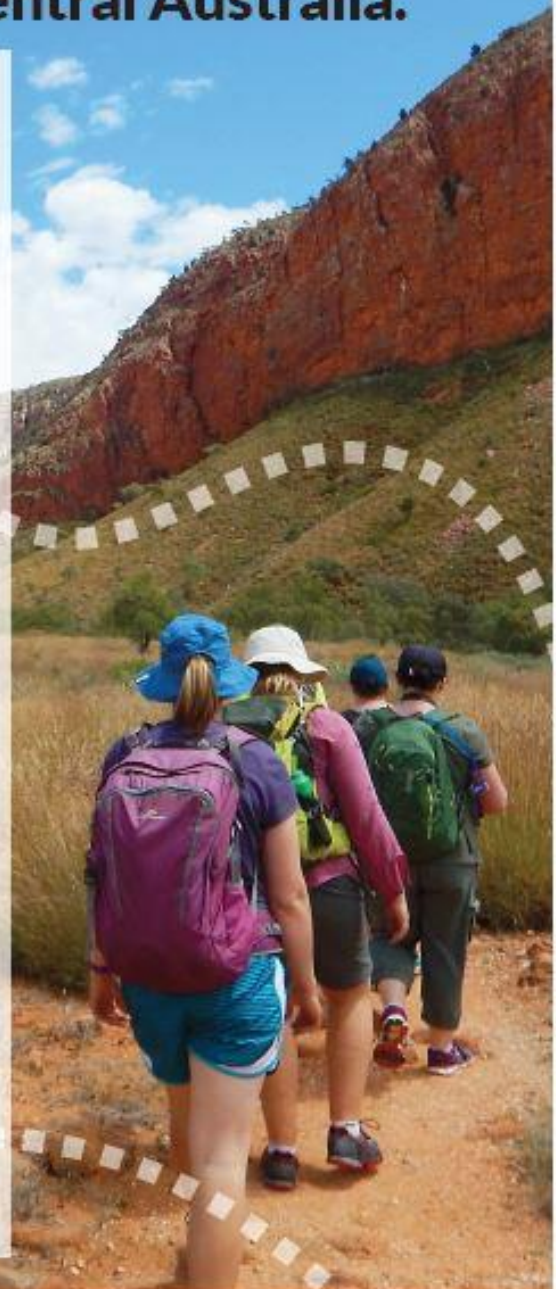
Meet: *Walks shelter, Ormiston Gorge.*

Remember to bring...



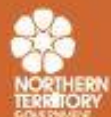
Bookings are essential as numbers are limited. Start times will be made available upon booking.

Please contact Jennifer on 8951 8247 or email jennifer.kreusser@nt.gov.au



ParksandWildlifeNT

www.nt.gov.au/parks





South American Wildlife Escapades

The Land for Wildlife team has been off exploring the greater world of wildlife in South America over the last month and a bit. Now that we are back in the office, we thought we might share some of the more exciting flora and fauna that we came across. Stay posted to the Alice Springs Field Naturalist Club newsletter as we may present a slideshow in the near future.

Our travels took us to Patagonia where we saw a host of wildflowers in a cool landscape reminiscent of central Australia. Flat tussocky plains surrounded by jagged mountain ranges, just a little more extreme and capped with snow compared to what we are used to around here. We spotted an Austral Pygmy Owl (*Glaucidium nana*) by the path to Perito Moreno Glacier where we trekked on the ice. The invasive Bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) was observed in hoards searching out nectar from the flowers around El Calafate (named after a berry that can grow in the area). Several Chimango Caracara (*Milvago chimango*) were spied at the Reserva Municipal Laguna Nimez, a bird reserve on the Lago (Lake) Argentino that was also home to many other aquatic species and was the site of our first Chilean Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*) sighting.

We then took off to see Iguazú / Iguazu Falls on the Argentina and Brazil border, where we were mobbed by thirsty butterflies and naughty Coati (*Nasua nasua*) looking to steal a snack from visitors. The nearby Parque das Aves was a haven of avian life and well worth the visit.

Our adventures continued as we went to Rio de Janeiro in time for Carnival, however wildlife could still be seen in the form of Humingbirds (Family: Trochillidae) and the Common Marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*), a species whose range has expanded from northern Brazil to the southern regions and is now considered invasive.

Clockwise from Top: Wildflowers in Patagonia, Austral Pygmy Owl (*Glaucidium nana*), Bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*), Chimango Caracara (*Milvago chimango*), butterfly (unidentified), Coati (*Nasua nasua*), Humingbird (Family Trochillidae) and a Common Marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*).



A Common Squirrel Monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*) and a Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*).



The next stop in Brazil was the Amazon, where we cruised the Rio Negro and Rio Solimões, seeing birds such as the Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*), White-throated Toucan (*Ramphastos tucanus*), and Yellow-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus Cela*) with their hanging bag-shaped nests. We were able to get up close and personal with a family of Common Squirrel Monkeys (*Saimiri sciureus*) and saw a slowly moving Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*).

We spent some time in Machu Picchu, where several Llama (*Lama glama*) could be seen grazing near the Incan ruins and a hike up Montana Machu Picchu enabled us to see several Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) and a very brief encounter (sadly not photographed) with a [Sword-billed Hummingbird](#) (*Ensifera ensifera*).

We left the mountains for the coast when the Galápagos started calling our name (see photos over the page). It was a feast for the senses, with different species in all directions and generally sitting calmly with only a few predators. The highlight was being able to see the Galapagos Giant Tortoise (*Chelonoidis nigra*) at the Charles Darwin Research Station. Close behind in the race for favourites was the Galápagos Sea Lion (*Zalophus wolfebaeki*), three species of Iguana (Galápagos Land Iguana *Conolophus subcristatus*, the Santa Fe Land Iguana *Conolophus pallidus*, and the Marine Iguana *Amblyrhynchus cristatus*), and two species of Booby (Nazca Booby *Sula granti* and the Blue-footed Booby *Sula nebouxii*). We were also able to see the Galápagos Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*), Galápagos Green Turtle (*Chelonia agassizii*), several species of Darwin's Finch (Family: Thraupidae) and the large Galápagos Prickly Pear (*Opuntia echios*). Snorkling in the clear blue waters enabled us to swim with the Sea Lions and see a range of fish and Whitetip Reef Sharks (*Triaenodon obesus*).

Following the Galapagos, we moved to dry land in Mexico City to explore the pyramids of Teotihuacan where we sighted a Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus obscurus*) before heading home. What a whirlwind and unforgettable trip!



A flowering Galápagos Prickly Pear (*Opuntia echios*).

Top Row: Llama (*Lama glama*), Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) and Galápagos Giant Tortoise (*Chelonoidis nigra*).
Bottom Row: Galápagos Sea Lion (*Zalophus wollebaeki*), Marine Iguana (*Amblyrhynchus cristatus*), and Nazca Booby (*Sula granti*) juvenile with parent.



Traps On Loan

Land for Wildlife provides a free trap loan service to members and also to members of the public on occasion. We currently have a high demand for traps and few to loan out. A friendly reminder that if you have borrowed a trap from Land for Wildlife and don't currently have a need for it, are not actively trapping, or haven't been overly successful of late—please let us know. We can come and collect the trap for you and redistribute it to other needy members.

On a related matter, Land for Wildlife hope to host a Spotted Turtle-dove trap-making workshop in the coming month when the weather cools, so stay posted for news on when and where.



More On Bush Foods

A couple of months ago, Land for Wildlife included a list of local bush foods from vegetation type 17. For those that missed it, you can [download the fact sheet](#) from our website's [Resources](#). But for those who would like to know more about some general Australian bush foods, click the links below to be redirected to some more interesting articles.



Article • Some useful bushfoods by Sustainable Gardening Australia



Article • 5 Bush tucker plants for your small garden by Milkwood



Article • The vegie patch - bush foods by ABC's Gardening Australia

A Grey-headed Flying Fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) fluttering between trees in Adelaide's Botanic Park earlier in March when the Land for Wildlife team were there for Womadelaide.



Further Reading

Click the link symbol to be redirected to the article



Article • Fossil find gives glimpse of pink flamingo life in Central Australia



Article • Kangaroo grass seeds hopping towards climate change



Article • Australia's little-known, misunderstood succulent plants



Article • The tasty spider



Article • The end of the Western Barred Bandicoot?

Cheers,

Caragh, Candice and Bill

Do you have any stories or images to share? Get in touch! We are always looking for members to share their experiences via our social media and newsletter. Email us with your suggestions of articles or topics that you wish to hear more about.

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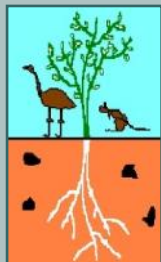
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Land for Wildlife & Garden for Wildlife Central Australia newsletter is published by Land for Wildlife, hosted by Low Ecological Services P/L, through funding from the Northern Territory Government.

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