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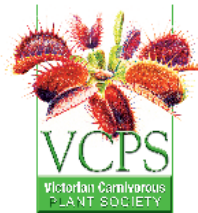
Victorian Carnivorous PLANT SOCIETY_{INC.}

SEPTEMBER 2025

VCPS NEWSLETTER NO. 21



Drosera fragrans



Victorian Carnivorous PLANT SOCIETY INC.

Newsletter No. 21

September 2025

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MEETING TOPICS & DATES for 2025

VICTORIAN CARNIVOROUS PLANT SOCIETY

This year we have scheduled the following discussion topics, and events:

January	(20th)	New Year BBQ (Contact for details)
February	(26th)	<i>Sarracenia</i> , <i>Dionaea</i> (VFT), beginners info
March	(26th)	<i>Nepenthes</i> & <i>Heliamphora</i> .
April	(5th)	VCPS 1 day Autumn show at Collectors Corner.
April	(23rd)	<i>Drosera</i> and information night.
May	(28th)	Growing conditions, 'Best' and 'Worst' plants, pygmy <i>Drosera</i> gemmae swap and <i>Nepenthes</i> cutting demonstration.
June	(25th)	AGM, plant give-away , any CPs.
July	(23rd)	Rosetted tuberous <i>Drosera</i> judging, Propagation – seed growing, division and cuttings. <i>Sarracenia</i> rhizome plant sale.
August	(27th)	Upright tuberous/Winter growing <i>Drosera</i> , show preparation, displays, and companion planting.
September	(24th)	<i>Cephalotus</i> , <i>Brocchinia</i> , <i>Catopsis</i> and swap night.
October	(22nd)	<i>Byblis</i> , pygmy <i>Drosera</i> , <i>Drosera binata</i> , <i>Drosophyllum</i> , <i>Genlisea</i> , <i>Pinguicula</i> , <i>Roridula</i> , <i>Utricularia</i> , any carnivorous plant, show preparation.
November	(Sunday, 23rd)	Triffid Park Open Day.
November	(29-30)	VCPS Annual show at Collectors Corner.

Please note: All meetings, other than those where a specific venue is given, will be on the **LAST FRIDAY of the month, STARTING AT 7.30PM** in the hall of the Pilgrim Uniting Church in Yarraville.
(Corner Bayview Rd and Montague St, enter through gate on Montague St)

Contents



Drosera aberrans, a tuberous sundew displaying a yellow colouration in their leaves as they start preparing for summer dormancy. Photo: Stephen Fretwell

VCPS Growers photos

If you'd like to publish a photo that you took of your plant in the VCPS journal. Please email it to Stephen Fretwell the VCPS designer at: stevefretwell24@gmail.com

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Seed Bank

We now have a huge collection of NEW fresh CP seed available, and our seed list has become quite extensive. With over 250 varieties of CP's, we are now providing the list in PDF format on our website, www.vcps.org For inquiries or to order seeds, please contact the VCPS Seedbank Officer.

The articles that are found within are copyright but can be copied freely if the author and source are acknowledged. The views are of the authors and are open to review and debate. Please send all material to the editor for consideration to be included in our quarterly journal.



FRONT COVER:
Drosera fragrans, Girraween.
Photo: Stephen Fretwell

- BACK COVER:**
Clockwise from top left:
- *Utricularia adamsii*, Humpty Doo. Photos: Stephen Fretwell
 - *Utricularia fulva*, Litchfield National Park.
 - *Utricularia limosa*, Fisher Lagoon, Humpty Doo.
 - *Utricularia linearis*, Litchfield National Park swamp.
 - *Drosera darwinensis*, Litchfield National Park.
 - *Drosera falconeri*, Litchfield National Park.
 - *Utricularia lasiocaulis*, Humpty Doo.
 - *Byblis aquatica*, Humpty Doo. (centre)

Design: Stephen Fretwell

VCPS News

New *Drosera* from the greater petiolaris complex described

Drosera actinioides, a new species from the *D. paradoxa* complex has just been described. *Drosera actinioides*, is a bizarre taxon of the greater "*D. petiolaris* complex" new to science. An unknown *Drosera* was collected for herbaria on May 16, 1981, at a remote coastal location in the inaccessible Northern Kimberley bioregion. Despite the vague habitat and locality information provided by the original collection, this unusual species was rediscovered and photographed for the first time during targeted surveys conducted by Noah Juve 43 years later on May 24, 2024.

Drosera actinioides is a spectacularly bizarre species. Leafy rosettes of this taxon typically range from 2 to 5 centimeters in diameter, while the inflorescence(s) supported by these diminutive plants can reach lengths of up to 54 centimeters. This constructs a remarkably disproportionate plant habit, the extremity of which is seen in no other taxon of this affinity. The highly branched, blackish red styles of this species (superficially resembling tentacles of the sea anemone genus *Actinia*) alone distinguish *D. actinioides* from all known members of the genus *Drosera*. *D. actinioides* is the only described member of *D. sect. Lasiocephala* bearing orange petals and is not synonymous with the "orange flowered form" of *D. paradoxa*. Noah along with Thilo Krueger and Andreas Fleischmann all collaboration on this exciting new discovery.

Noah Juve - Facebook

Their paper published by the knowledgeable and efficient team at Nuytsia can be read below:
<https://florabase.dbca.wa.gov.au/nuytsia/article/1098>



Drosera actinioides. Photographs taken in situ by N. Juve (A–G, I, J), and from the holotype H. Demarz 8887 by T. Krueger (H).



Drosera actinioides. Photo: Noah Juve

VCPS News

A new species added to the *D. indica* complex

Another new species has just been added to the "*Drosera indica* complex": *Drosera bracteosa*. This species is most noteworthy for producing exceptionally large floral bracts which are among the largest in the genus (hence its name). Only the South African *D. regia* has comparably sized ones. These bracts are remarkable not just for their size, but also for their distinctive colouring and deeply cupped shape, which clearly distinguishes this new species from all other members of the genus.

The closest known relative of *D. bracteosa* is *D. hartmeyerorum*, and both species are characterised by the presence of yellow-headed modified tentacles on their leaves and bracts. Notably, the modified tentacles of *D. bracteosa* are smaller and only occur in sparse clusters, making them far less conspicuous. Their ecological function remains unknown for now.

Drosera bracteosa is only known from three locations in East Arnhem Land and the adjacent Roper Gulf Region in the Northern Territory, though it is likely to be more widespread due to limited botanical surveys in these remote parts of Australia.

The species has been formally described by Andreas Fleischmann and Thilo Kruger, and their paper was published in the botanical journal *Muelleria* of RBGV Science

THILO KRUGER - FACEBOOK

Their paper can be viewed in this link: <https://rbgv-prod-cdn-bpfb4gthrfzb4ab.a03.azurefd.net/media/b04bohoc/muelleria-44-kruger-d-bracteosa-23-33.pdf>



Drosera bracteosa flowers during the dry season from May to July. Photos: Thilo Kruger



Drosera bracteosa unlike *D. hartmeyerorum*, appears to always have a green colouration.



A close-up of 3 yellow headed modified tentacles at the leaf base.



Smaller yellow-headed modified tentacles are found along the whole upper leaf surface. (As marked by the red arrows).

VCPS News

Articles needed for VCPS journal

Have you ever wanted to contribute and publish an article about cultivating, propagating or seeing carnivorous plants in the wild. Do you experience any issues growing particular species?

The VCPS is looking for articles, whether they're short ones or long ones to add more diversity and to help share information to its members and readers.

If you need any ideas or you're not sure what to write about, please contact David Petch or Stephen Fretwell.

Please email it to the editor
Stephen Fretwell at:
stevefretwell24@gmail.com



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Spectacular Sumatra

STEPHEN FRETWELL
PART 1

I have written a number of articles for the VCPS journal, and I am now looking for more. I have been to many places in the world, and I have seen many different carnivorous plants. I have also written about the history of the VCPS, and I have been to many places in the world, and I have seen many different carnivorous plants. I have also written about the history of the VCPS, and I have been to many places in the world, and I have seen many different carnivorous plants.

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VCPS 5





***U. dunlopia*, Howard Springs.**
Photos: Stephen Fretwell



A flooded habitat area at the Howard Springs sandy plain location where *U. leptoplectra* grows.

Photos: Stephen Fretwell

Extraordinary carnivorous plants around Darwin

BY STEPHEN FRETWELL

PART 3

After a brilliant second day exploring and seeing so many species, our hopes were high for finding many more over the next few days.

On our third day, we first visited a large, wet sandy plain near Howard Springs, an area known to support more than ten species. We drove along a dirt track for some distance until we reached a wet-looking gully that seemed ideal for finding plants.

After parking, we had walked only about 10m before spotting bright red *D. aff. dilatatopetolaris* and *D. burmanii*. They were not looking their best, so we continued. A little farther on, we found a small seep, which we followed. After some careful searching close to the ground, Dave found our second antennae bladderwort species, *D. dunlopia*.

Like *D. capilliflora*, *D. dunlopia* is extremely fine and small, with two distinct antennae. It differs from *D. capilliflora* by having only three lower corolla appendages, while its two upper antennae grow opposite each other. In contrast, *D. capilliflora*



A pale flowered variant of *U. leptoplectra*, Howard Springs, sand plains.

has five lower corolla appendages, and its upper antennae usually cross over.

Both species are easy to overlook, but Dave managed to find several *D. dunlopia* flowers in a small area, which was fantastic to see. Within the same 2m patch, we also found flowers of *U. chrysantha*, *D. quinqueidentata* and *D. nivea* growing together.

After spending considerable time photographing the tiny, distinctive flowers of *D. dunlopia* with



U. minutissima, Howard Springs.



U. caerulea, Howard Springs.



U. quinquedentata, Howard Springs.



U. nivea, Howard Springs.



The front of *U. chrysantha* flowers.



Underside of *U. chrysantha* flowers.



D. aff. dilatatopetiolaris, Howard Springs sand plain.



D. aff. dilatatopetiolaris, Howard Springs sand plain.

tripods and camera remotes to capture as much detail as possible, we continued along the gully, following a very wet, sandy seep that looked as though it could become a trail in the dry season. The middle of the gully was the wettest section, being the lowest point, and favoured species that prefer wetter conditions, including *D. aquatica*, *D. burmanii*, *U. caerulea*, *U. leptoplectra*, *D. minutissima*, *D. nivea* and *D. quinquedentata*. These were often found where a thin film of water covered the soil and moss was thriving. *D. aquatica*, *D. burmanii* and *U. leptoplectra* were common, while *D. nivea* and *D. quinquedentata* appeared only where conditions

suited them. It may not have been quite the right time of year, as flowers of *D. minutissima* and *U. caerulea* were extremely difficult to find, and we saw only a couple of each at this location. However, we did see many developing flower scapes nearby, suggesting they may flower later as conditions dry out.

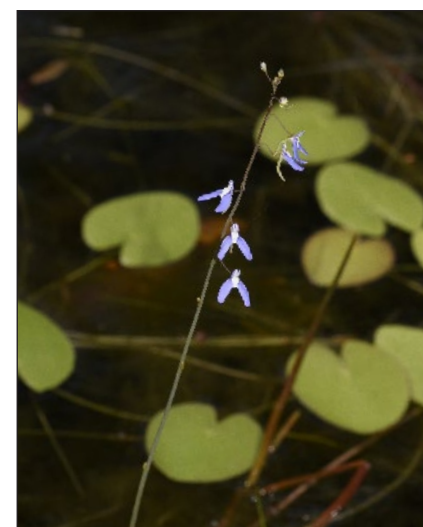
On the sides of the gully, where the soil was drier and there was less moss, species such as *U. chrysantha* and *D. aff. dilatatopetiolaris* were more common. The *D. aff. dilatatopetiolaris* plants at this site were stunning, generally deep red throughout, with very long, narrow petioles and round leaves covered in red tentacles and



Two *U. dunlopia* flowers growing amongst *D. burmanii*.



D. burmanii, Howard Springs sand plain.



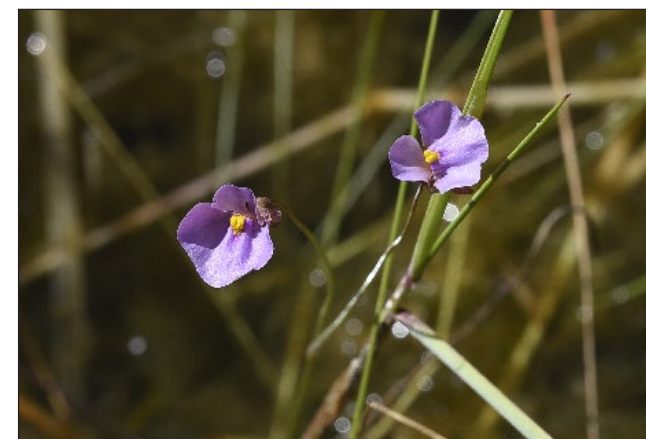
U. leptoplectra from Fisher Lagoon.



D. aquatica from Fisher Lagoon.



U. limosa from Fisher Lagoon.



U. lasiocaulis from Fisher Lagoon.



The Fisher Lagoon habitat.

glands. The type form of *D. dilatatopetiolaris* has thicker petioles, which is why we treated these plants as *D. aff.*; if anything, they seemed to resemble *D. petiolaris* more closely. Nearby *D. burmanii* plants were also very red, perhaps due to the soil substrate, as the ground was still very wet and the colour was unlikely to be caused by roots drying out.

Farther along the sandy trail, the ground was sometimes covered by a few centimetres of water. Near these areas, we found several small ponds, most with crystal-clear water filled with waterlilies, aquatic plants and *Utricularia*. *U. leptoplectra* was common in

and around the ponds, generally growing in very wet areas as an affixed aquatic, and it was often flowering profusely. Most plants at this site were typical, with dark blue-purple flowers and yellow undersides, although I found one pale mauve-flowered variant, which was a lovely surprise.

Of all the ponds we encountered, only one contained aquatic *Utricularia*, which turned out to be *U. gibba*. It was growing extremely well and was present in large numbers, although strangely only a few flowers were visible.

After spending a few hours at the sandy plain site, we



U. muelleri flowering plants at Fisher Lagoon.



A large spectacular *U. muelleri* plant in full flower at Fisher Lagoon.

drove to nearby Fisher Lagoon. Once we arrived and saw how wet the area was, we immediately returned to the car to put on our gumboots. An off-road track led down to the main part of the lagoon, but the whole area was flooded and our SUV would not have gone far, so we had to explore on foot from the main road.

The two main species we hoped to see at this site were *U. linearis* and *U. triflora*. Both are affixed aquatic plants that grow in shallow swamps and lagoons, and judging by how wet the area was, we felt we were in the right place.

The first species we found, in an area where the water had recently receded, was the blue-flowered form of *U. limosa*. Like the white form we had seen



A long straggly *Byblis aquatica* plant in flower.



D. dilatatopetiolaris from the ponds location growing in a dry area.

the day before, the flowers were quite small, about 6–7mm across, but striking up close. They had a pale blue horseshoe-shaped corolla and a white, humped central palate with dark yellow ridges near the flower opening. Around a dozen 15–20cm tall flower scapes were present, each carrying multiple flowers. The largest scape we found branched twice and held nine open flowers, which was very impressive.

Not far away, we also saw some *D. dilatatopetiolaris* and *U. chrysantha* growing in what looked like sandy mud, but they were not looking their best, so we kept moving.

As we entered the flooded track, the water was shallow at first, but after about 100m we had to stay to



A dark red form of *D. dilatatopetiolaris* from the Humpty Doo region.



D. burmanii from a sandy region in Humpty Doo.



A clump of *D. dilatatopetiolaris* from Humpty Doo.



A large robust plant of *D. aquatica*.



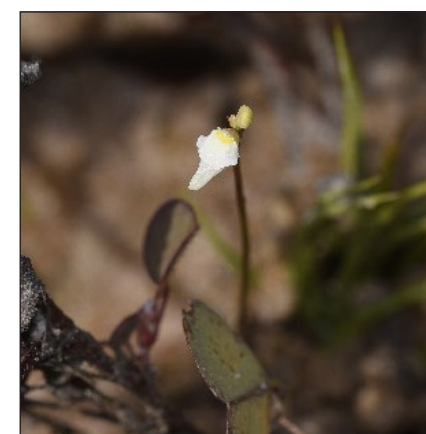
D. fragrans in flower in Humpty Doo.



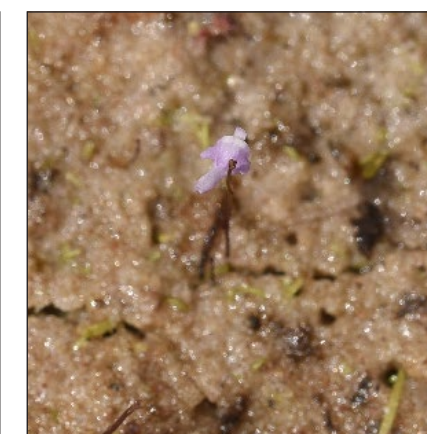
D. aquatica plants from Humpty Doo.



U. quinquedentata, Humpty Doo.



U. nivea, Humpty Doo.



U. minutissima, Humpty Doo.

the side where the ground was higher to avoid water filling our gumboots. After a couple of hundred metres, we spotted yellow flowers on an aquatic *Utricularia* growing in knee-deep water in the middle of the track, with floats around the base of the flower scape. They were too far away to examine closely, but a little farther down the track we found several within reach and identified them as *U. muelleri*. These plants were growing in full sun, which had turned the flower-scape floats a rich dark burgundy.

Most of the flower scapes we saw had open flowers at the top and appeared to be nearing the end of the season, but some still produced impressive clusters of six to eight open flowers. Looking closely beneath the

floats, we could also see the long aquatic growths of *U. muelleri*, which appeared dark and fluffy because of silt and algae build-up on the feather-like leaves. Their length varied from plant to plant, but they often exceeded 80cm to 1m, depending on how much the plant had branched.

Growing sporadically along the path, we also saw *D. aquatica*, which often lived up to its name by growing in 10–25cm of water, with only the healthy growing tip protruding above the surface. The plants were often supported by surrounding grasses; without support, they became top-heavy, fell over and scrambled along the substrate.

The *D. aquatica* there had pale green leaves with



D. aquatica plants growing alongside *U. leptoplectra* and *U. odorata* in Humpty Doo.



U. odorata in flower, Humpty Doo.



U. capilliflora in flower, Humpty Doo.



U. lasiocaulis in flower, Humpty Doo.

white tentacles and red glands, contrasting with dark red flower scapes bearing pale pink flowers. Fortunately, many of the plants we saw there were also in flower.

As we neared the lagoon itself, the water unfortunately became deeper and deeper until we could go no farther without soaking our legs and feet. We searched all accessible areas for *U. linearis* and *U. triflora*, but without success. The grasses were extremely thick in some places and more open in others, so there appeared to be plenty of suitable habitat.

On the way back, we explored away from the track near the Eucalyptus trees and found many *U. leptoplectra* in flower, some with exceptionally long flower scapes 60-80cm tall.

The last species we encountered at Fisher Lagoon was *U. lasiocaulis*. At first glance, I thought it might have

been the *U. triflora* we were looking for because of its purple flower colour, but on closer inspection the flower shape and two distinct yellow ridges allowed me to identify it as *U. lasiocaulis*. We found only four flowers in the area, growing in at least 10cm of water among thick grass, so it was a fairly lucky find.

Once we returned to the car, we drove to another nearby site where *U. linearis* and *U. triflora* were also supposed to grow. This area was quite different from Fisher Lagoon and seemed very dry. The maps showed several small ponds in the area, so it was still worth checking. On the way to the ponds, we walked across white sand that looked dry but was still damp underneath, and we found more *D. dilatopetiolaris* and *U. chrysantha* growing there.

When we arrived at the first pond, it looked heavily



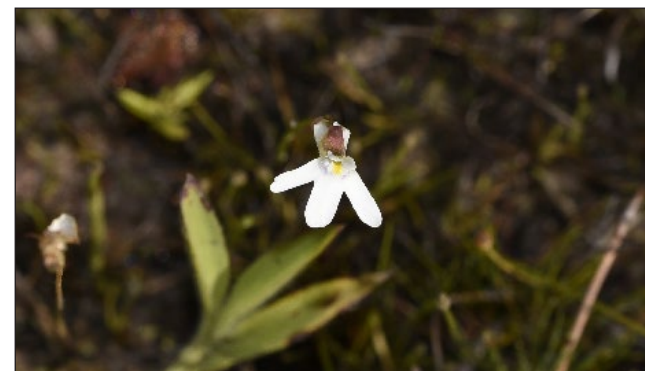
The Humpty Doo golf course area habitat by the side of the track.



Dave wiping the sweat off his face from the intense and relentless heat during the afternoon.



A narrow lower corolla variant of *U. kamienskii* from the Humpty Doo region.



A more typical *U. kamienskii* flower that we commonly saw on our trip in the Humpty Doo region.



An unusual green variant of *D. fulva* found growing at the Howard Springs Nature Park.



A typical coloured plant of *D. fulva* found growing at the same location at the Howard Springs Nature Park.

overgrown with grasses, but as we walked around to the back, we could see some open water, although no *Utricularia* were in flower. We explored farther and, to our surprise, found some old, scruffy-looking *Byblis aquatica* plants growing along the pond's edge in fairly thick grass. Luckily, their purple flowers were fully open, making them much easier to spot.

After checking the next couple of ponds without success, we decided to head back to town for lunch, escape the extreme heat and humidity, and rest for a while.

After lunch, we headed out to explore some locations near the Humpty Doo Golf Course. The soils there were extremely sandy and very wet, with some areas covered by a shallow layer of water. Beside the track, a water-filled gutter also supported *Utricularia* and some *Drosera*.

The most common species, which appeared to dominate the site, were *D. aquatica*, *D. burmanii*, *D. dilatopetiolaris*, *U. leptoplectra* and *U. odorata*.

We were also pleasantly surprised to see *D. fragrans* and its stunning bright pink-red flowers, along with more of the unique antennae-like flowers of *D. capilliflora*, *U. kamienskii*, *U. lasiocaulis*, *D. minutissima*, *D. nivea* and *D. quinquentata*. Many of these had been rare at most locations, with only a few flowers seen.

The last place we visited on day 3 was Howard Springs Nature Park, where we hoped to see *Drosera fulva*.

After walking along a trail for about 10 minutes, Darren led us into a bushy area that was again extremely sandy, but also very dry. After a few more minutes, we came across our first *D. fulva* plants.



D. dilatatopetiolaris found by the side of the road at our first location stop.



D. aff. dilatatopetiolaris found by the side of the road at our first stop.



D. falconeri x *darwinensis* found growing alongside both parent plants.



D. darwinensis in Litchfield National Park.



D. darwinensis dying back, preparing to enter dormancy.

The condition of the plants varied depending on where they were growing, either in the open or in slight shade. In exposed areas, the soil was so dry that some plants had shorter leaf petioles, and a few had begun producing white fuzzy stipules to cover and protect the central growing point.

Meanwhile, plants growing in shadier positions still had the typical long-petioled leaves and looked much like some of the *D. dilatatopetiolaris* plants we had seen earlier on the trip.

Another interesting feature of the *D. fulva* plants at this site was the variation in leaf colour. Some specimens had red tentacles and glands, while others had clear to white tentacles and glands, giving the plants an overall yellow-green appearance.

Surprisingly, *U. chrysantha* was also flowering among the *D. fulva* in the dry sand. After taking a few more photos of these flowers in a different habitat, we headed back to our hotels for another cold, refreshing shower before going out to dinner after a long but rewarding day.

Our schedule for day 4 involved quite a bit of driving, as we planned to complete a circuit around Litchfield National Park. The main plants we hoped to see were *D. falconeri*, *D. darwinensis*, *U. adamsii*, *U. linearis* and *U. fulva*, most of which we had not yet encountered. We also hoped to visit some of the area's natural and

historical attractions, including waterfalls, waterholes, termite mounds, and the old World War II aircraft runways and interpretive displays.

Our first roadside stop was only a brief pit stop, but we still managed to find a few plants, including what looked like *D. aff. petiolaris* and some *D. dilatatopetiolaris*.

The next site was one of our main locations for the day and was a good place to see *D. darwinensis*, *D. falconeri* and their distinctive hybrid. As we began exploring, we noticed that this habitat was also becoming extremely dry; the ground was firm to the touch and difficult to dig beneath the surface with a finger.

The first plants we found were *D. darwinensis* growing in the open. They were looking fairly ordinary, with many leaves starting to blacken and die off as the plants entered dormancy and began producing white fuzzy stipules. After searching farther into longer grass, we found many healthier plants that received some shade during the day. Some were slightly greener, which was expected under lower light.

Nearby, under the cover of the grasses, we found our first *D. falconeri* plants at this location. Many were also looking ordinary and varied from green to red, but their size was impressive, with several rosettes measuring 10–12cm across. As we continued exploring, we also found some *D. burmanii*, including one in flower. Along



A large red *D. falconeri* plant in Litchfield National Park.



Wangi Falls inside Litchfield National Park.



Three large *D. falconeri* plants found growing under grass.



A dark red plant of *D. falconeri* in Litchfield National Park.

the edge of the grass line were a few smaller but more spectacular *D. darwinensis* and *D. falconeri* plants. One *D. darwinensis* was beginning to enter dormancy but still had many healthy red leaves, larger around the outside of the rosette and gradually smaller toward the centre.

The *D. falconeri* plants growing along the grass-line edge, however, looked extremely good. They had a decent amount of dew and a stunning dark red colouration that made them look spectacular.

While we were busy photographing the two species, Darren searched for the hybrid between them and soon pointed out a couple of stunning plants. The *D. darwinensis* x *D. falconeri* hybrid looked somewhat similar to *D. darwinensis*, but had much larger carnivorous leaves, presumably inherited from *D. falconeri*.

After photographing this amazing hybrid, we continued on to beautiful Wangi Falls inside Litchfield National Park. As soon as we parked and got out of the

car, we could hear the roar of the waterfall. A short path led down to a small lake, and on the far side, between the trees, we could see a 40–50m cliff rising to a plateau, with two waterfalls plunging into the lake.

A metal boardwalk had been built above the vegetation to protect it and provide visitors with a fantastic unobstructed view of the falls. The larger waterfall threw up a huge amount of spray, which glistened in the morning sunlight.

From the viewing platform, the waterfalls were about 50–60m away on the other side of the lake. Unfortunately, swimming was not allowed because the area is natural freshwater crocodile habitat, with warning signs placed throughout the site.

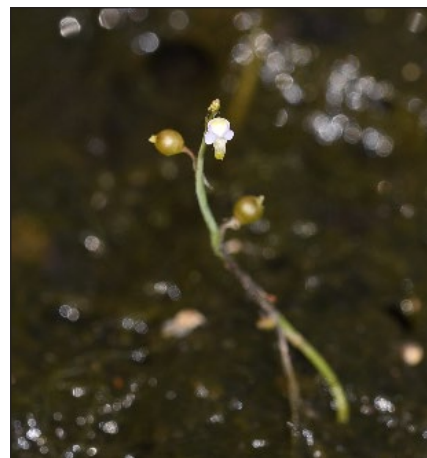
After visiting Wangi Falls, we drove on to our next CP site, a swamp. We walked around the water's edge until we reached a shady open spot where we could see many aquatic *Utricularia* growing among



U. adamsii, Litchfield NP swamp.



U. linearis, Litchfield NP swamp.



U. limosa, Litchfield NP swamp.



The watery swamp habitat inside Litchfield NP.



U. chrysantha at the front of the swamp inside Litchfield NP.



A large clump of *D. dilatatopetiolaris* growing at a Litchfield NP swamp.



A pale mauve *U. limosa*, Litchfield NP swamp.



D. dilatatopetiolaris, Litchfield NP swamp.

large Eucalyptus trees standing in the water. We each pulled out a small strand for a closer look, but without flowers we could not identify it. After some determined searching, we found a few small yellow flowers, which allowed us to identify it as *Utricularia adamsii*. Once we had found the first few flowers, we spotted hundreds of developing buds either just below or poking through the water surface. Unfortunately, none were fully open for a great photo, but it was still another species to add to the list.

Growing near *U. adamsii*, we found an affixed *Utricularia* in flower: *U. limosa*, also growing among the large Eucalyptus trees. At this site, it had very pale

mauve to white flowers and seemed to be abundant only around the water's edge, in the shallows and in mud on the drying outskirts, which may have been the trigger for flowering.

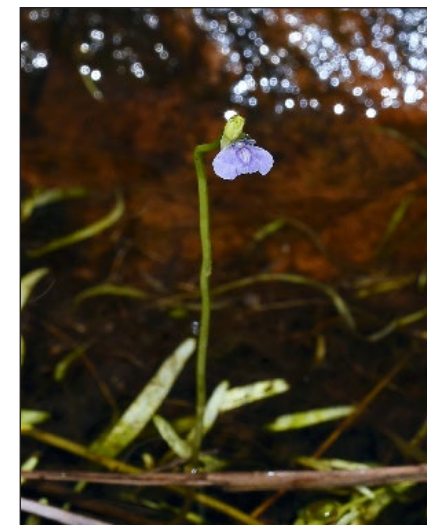
As we continued exploring, we ventured into slightly deeper water and finally found the third and last *Utricularia* species we hoped to see in flower at this location: *Utricularia linearis*. These flowers were easy to distinguish from the other two species because *U. linearis* has pure white flowers with yellow palate ridges, a larger and more pleated corolla, and longer, more robust stems that rose at least 10cm above the water and carried multiple flower buds.



U. fulva growing at the rock pool area.



A 3 lobed upper corolla on *U. fulva*.



U. uliginosa, in a rock pool seep.



A flowing stream that runs through the rock pool area.



A water monitor lizard found around the rock pool area.

After taking good photos of the three *Utricularia* species and their habitat, we wandered around to the front of the swamp near the road, where we had noticed an abundance of yellow from the car. Once we reached the roadside depression, we were greeted by hundreds of yellow *U. chrysantha* flowers. This form did not have the orange-red colouration on the underside of the flowers; instead, the underside was the same yellow as the front. The sandy habitat was becoming extremely dry in the open, with barely any moisture below the soil surface, causing many small grasses and weeds to yellow and die off.

Also growing among the *U. chrysantha* and affected by the drying conditions was *D. dilatatopetiolaris*. Most plants had started forming woolly protective stipules in the centre and silvery petioles that helped reflect light and heat, giving them a distinctive look compared with plants at other sites.

Not far from a fallen log, where there was slightly more moisture in the soil, we stumbled across some extremely large clumps of *D. dilatatopetiolaris*. There were about seven plants, each with multiple growing points, often 8–12 per plant, and they were spectacular to see.

As we kept exploring the area and finding plants in different stages of growth, we also unexpectedly found more mauve *U. limosa* flowers in the dry area. There were not many of them, but the ones we did see were

much darker in colour, perhaps due to greater sun exposure.

The next location we visited was a picnic area with a small flowing stream and rockhole. This area was extremely busy with people trying to escape the heat and cool off in the water.

For us, however, swimming in the cool water was not our primary objective, as a unique *Utricularia* species, *U. fulva*, grows there. When we arrived at the spot where Darren had previously seen it flowering en masse, there was sadly nothing visible except the long, narrow leaves. We got down to business and began exploring, and after about five minutes we were rewarded with our goal: several 10–15cm tall scapes bearing the spectacular flowers of *U. fulva*, growing among grasses on the edge of a small rockpool.

What makes these flowers so unique is the dark red splotching on the pale yellow palate and partly across the top of the darker yellow-orange lower corolla.

The flower typically has a two-lobed upper corolla lip, although we saw a couple of unusual examples with three-lobed upper corollas.

While looking for *U. fulva*, we also came across a few of other species. *D. burmanii* was well past its best, and *U. gibba* was growing in a large rockpool nearby, although not in flower. Around the rockpool edges and in a small seep below, we also saw the long strap-like



The lookout to the magnetic termite mounds.



Darren posing in an airplane from the WWII Strauss Airfield.



A huge magnetic termite mound.



U. leptoplectra, Humpty Doo.



D. aquatica, Roadside, Humpty Doo.



D. dilatopetiolaris at a Roadside drain in Humpty Doo.



D. burmanii at a Roadside drain in Humpty Doo.

leaves of *U. uliginosa*, another first for the trip. The leaves in the seep were growing submerged underwater, and after some searching we found a couple of 6–8cm scapes rising out of the water, each bearing mauve flowers with a striped palate.

After taking some photos of the flowers, we had a quick dip in the water to cool off, then headed back to the car, passing a large water monitor that had also come down to the water.

We still had a couple of other non-CP sites to see on the way back to Darwin. The first was a lookout at the magnetic termite mounds. Beside the carpark were a couple of massive termite mounds, including one named

the “Cathedral”, which measured approximately 4m high, although these structures can reach up to 6 m and last for 50–100 years.

Because the area floods, the termites cannot burrow underground to escape the extreme heat, so they build large wedge-shaped structures above the waterlogged soil. These mounds are aligned north to south, with the narrow side facing the sun to minimise internal temperatures. The wider rear side remains shaded, helping maintain a consistent temperature inside for the termites to live, store food and survive.

Beyond a large information board, a looped walkway led to a raised wooden boardwalk, as the ground is



Hundreds of people gathered for the Darwin night market.



The stunning beach sunset in Darwin.



Howard Springs lagoon habitat.



U. adamsii, Howard Springs lagoon.



U. adamsii plant and traps.

sometimes flooded after heavy rain. The area was covered in long grass, but beside the boardwalk in some wet areas, *U. leptoplectra* flowers were easy to see on their long 60–70 cm scapes. The boardwalk provided several great views of more than 50 large magnetic termite mounds stretching through the long grass as far as we could see, which was pretty amazing.

Moving on, we soon returned to the main highway, which had a top speed limit of 130km/h, and quickly reached our next sightseeing stop: the old Strauss Airfield from World War II. It was one of several airfields built in 1942 and could accommodate 46 aircraft defending Darwin.

There were several information boards about the airfield, planes and other features, such as the stop butts used to align the fighter planes' machine guns. After a bit of searching, we found a couple of old machine-gun bullets.

Our last stop for the day was back near Humpty Doo, where we turned down a dirt road that was still flooded, so we could only drive a short way.

We walked the remaining section on foot until we reached a drainage area behind some native bush, where we found many healthy plants of *D. aquatica*, red *D. burmanii* and *D. dilatopetiolaris*, along with several *Utricularia* species, including *U. adamsii*, *U. kamienskii*, *U. leptoplectra* and *D. nivea*.

By then it was getting late, and we wanted to return to Darwin in time to clean up before heading to a local beachside food-truck market. There, we enjoyed choosing from a huge range of dinner options and finished the day with dessert on the beach while watching the sunset.

For my fifth and final day in Darwin, Dave and I unfortunately had to say goodbye to Darren and Jill, who were staying in the Northern Territory for a few more days and heading to Kakadu to look for a couple of species found in that region. Kakadu is more than a 3–3.5-hour drive each way, so we did not have time to join them before our late-afternoon flights. So we thanked them for all of their help with finding so many species and for their excellent company.

Instead, Dave and I headed back to the Howard Springs area to look at a couple of other sites we had not had time to visit on the previous days.

The first site we visited was a lagoon where we hoped to possibly see *Utricularia tubulata*, and there was certainly plenty of water. The problem was that the vegetation around it was very thick, with long dense grass that did not seem ideal for *Utricularia*. However, after some intensive searching, we found a couple of open muddy areas and saw a few more *U. adamsii* flowers, but that was all. After about 15 minutes, we gave up and decided instead to check a small pond beside the track.



U. chrysantha flower found at the Howard Springs lagoon location.



A pale mauve *U. leptoplectra* flower, at the Howard Springs lagoon location.



D. fragrans flowering, at the Howard Springs lagoon location.



D. dilatatopetiolaris (left) and ***D. fulva*** found growing together at the Howard Springs lagoon location.



One of the small pond habitats found near the Howard Springs lagoon.

There was not a lot of water in the pond, but many CP species were growing around it, either on the wet margins or in the sandy surroundings. We did not find any new species, but still saw some great specimens of *D. fulva* with plenty of dew on their glands, lovely dark red *D. dilatatopetiolaris*, and the stunning bright flowers of *D. fragrans*. We also saw *D. aquatica*, *D. burmanii*, *U. chrysantha*, the white-flowered form of *U. limosa*, *D. nivea*, *D. quinquedentata* and *U. leptoplectra*. The *U. leptoplectra* grew in and around the pond edges and initially did not seem unusual, but I again found one very distinctive flower stem with an extraordinary pale blue-mauve flower that was even lighter in colour than the one that I found at the sand plain site. At first, I thought it was simply an old, faded flower, but on closer inspection it clearly was not and was instead a very pale form.

After we had explored the area thoroughly, we drove to the next site, which was not too far away. A creek ran through this site, and it was our last hope of seeing a couple of new species for the trip.

Again, the habitat did not seem ideal, as a lot of long, weedy grass grew beside the creek, but since we were there, we thought we might as well have a look. We

pushed through about 50m of thick grass before the habitat looked even remotely suitable for CPs, and sure enough, as the grass thinned, we came across some *Byblis aquatica*. As we had noticed at other locations, these were long, spindly plants growing up and out of the grassy habitat. Even though it was still quite early in the morning, some flowers were open on a couple of plants, which was a real bonus.

By this point we had walked about 100m from the car, and thick shrubs had forced us closer to the creek. This turned out to be quite fortunate, as it led to the discovery of a couple of *Drosera banksii* plants growing under the surrounding taller grass.

This species is quite different from the other *Drosera* around the Darwin region. It grows upright and resembles a small tuberous *Drosera* from Victoria, such as *D. gunniana* or *D. gracilis*.

D. banksii, however, is not tuberous at all. It is an upright annual species with roundish to oval leaves, growing 3–25cm tall and relying on seed to return each year.

We found two small plants growing together, one about 5 cm tall and the other about 10 cm. Both were producing flower scapes, and the taller plant was



D. nana (left) and possibly ***D. aquatica***, or a hybrid found growing together at the Howard Springs grassy habitat.



One of the small pond habitats found near the Howard Springs lagoon.



D. aquatica, found growing at the Howard Springs grassy habitat.



D. banksii, found growing at the Howard Springs grassy habitat.



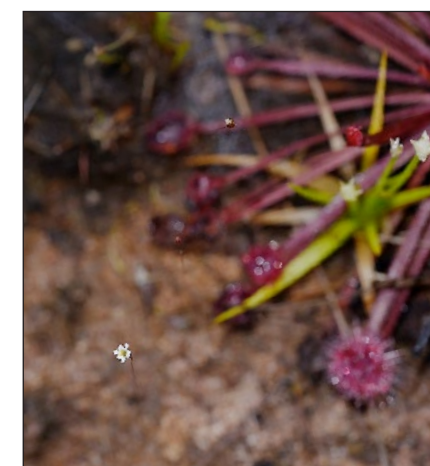
Byblis aquatica, found growing at the Howard Springs grassy habitat.



D. nana, found growing at the Howard Springs grassy habitat.



U. adamsii found growing in a small stream in the Howard Springs area.



U. quinquedentata flowering next to a ***D. dilatatopetiolaris*** plant.

showing white petals and looked likely to open later that day. As we explored the area, we found about a dozen plants in various stages of growth. Some were still extremely small, while others growing among taller competing grasses were more than 20cm tall and flowering.

Around the same area, we came across another new species for the trip: *Drosera nana*. This species resembles members of the *Arachnopus* group, or indica complex like *D. aquatica*, but is smaller and more delicate, rarely reaching 10cm at maturity.

The plants we saw all looked a little scruffy, as the lower leaves on the stems had died off and only five or six healthy leaves remained on the sometimes-scrambling plants. Fortunately, this species was also producing flower scapes, and we were lucky to see a few specimens in flower.

All but one of the *D. nana* plants we saw had small white flowers. The exception was a plant near the car with pink flowers. We think it was *D. nana* because of its size, but it may have been a small *D. aquatica* plant or even a hybrid.



D. aff. dilatatopetiolaris, Girraween.



A *U. chrysantha* pale flower, Girraween.



D. fulva in its habitat at Girraween.



The habitat around the small drying pond at Girraween.



D. fragrans in flower growing with *D. fulva* at Girraween.

Also growing at this location were clean, healthy *D. burmanii* plants. In and beside the water, we found many *D. aquatica*, several of them in flower and displaying both pink and white blooms. The plants also varied noticeably in colour, perhaps due to hybridisation. Some looked robust and typical, with green leaves and stems and broad pink petals, while others were much finer, with red leaves and stems and small white or pink narrow-petalled flowers.

Growing near the *D. aquatica* in areas we could access along the creek's edge, we also found several species of *Utricularia*. *U. leptoplectra* was not really a surprise, but we also found the white-flowered form of *U. limosa* and two aquatic species, *U. gibba* and *U. adamsii*. The latter had fully open flowers for us to see this time, which was great.

Since we still had some spare time, we decided to return to the first couple of sites we had visited in Girraween. The first was the *U. simmonsii* site, where a small pond had almost dried up. Finding the plants was again a real challenge, but after getting down on our hands and knees, we finally found a few half-open flowers.

Growing nearby on the edge of the drying pond were some lovely plants that we ended up calling

D. aff. petiolaris because of their long, narrow petioles. Most had dark red leaves and petioles, except for the new leaves in the centre. Several plants had also formed large clumps with four to six growing points, making them look quite substantial.

As we moved away from the pond, the substrate became extremely sandy. In these areas we found some nice *D. aquatica* plants in flower, along with many *D. fulva*. Some of the *D. fulva* were dying back and preparing for dry-season dormancy, while others closer to the pond still looked good because of the extra moisture in the soil.

My new favourite Darwin species, *D. fragrans*, was also growing at this site and was in flower, much to my delight. Its vivid colour never ceased to amaze me. The last species we looked at was *U. chrysantha*. It was hard to tell how much was present, as the bright yellow flowers were quite sporadic. Even so, I still managed to find a rare pale-flowered variant, which is always interesting.

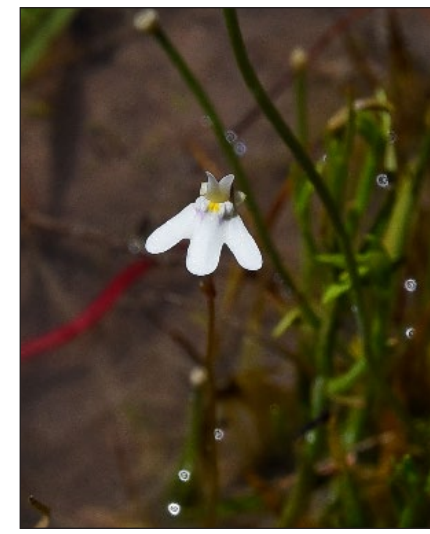
The last site we visited for the trip was the very first site again, and it was still looking fantastic because of the natural spring, which created a small, consistent seep. Many *Utricularia* were flowering along it, including hundreds of yellow *U. odorata* flowers, along with



U. leptoplectra, Girraween.



U. caerulea, Girraween.



U. kamienskii, Girraween.



U. odorata, Girraween.



D. dilatatopetiolaris, Girraween.



Several species growing together.



Dave taking photos at the last site in Girraween.

U. leptoplectra, *U. kamienskii* and *U. caerulea*. The latter proved quite rare on the trip, as we managed to see it in flower at only two sites.

After taking our last photos and spending a little time taking in the final site of the trip, we appreciated just how good this location really was. We could easily have spent another few hours exploring it further, but unfortunately, we had run out of time and needed to head back to Darwin to get some lunch and to finish packing.

After some lunch we had a refreshing swim at the enclosed esplanade lake which we'd been dying to do all week, finished packing then headed off to the airport.



The enclosed esplanade lake in Darwin.

Once we arrived, I then had to say goodbye to Dave, who was heading back to Sydney on a different flight. I thanked him for being such a great plant-hunting companion, travel mate and for organising so much of the trip.

While I waited for my flight, I scrolled through my photos and reminisced about the fantastic places we had visited and the amazing plants we had seen over the previous five days.

If anyone has the chance to visit Darwin between February and May, I highly recommend it, and I will definitely be going back again.



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Journal articles, in MS-Word, ready for publication, may be Emailed to the Editor or Secretary.

Meetings

Most VCPS meetings are held in the hall at the rear of the Pilgrim Uniting Church on the corner of Bayview Road and Montague Street, Yarraville – Melway map reference 41K7. These meetings are on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 8 PM.

However, some meetings may be at the home of members during a weekend. Details of meeting dates and topics are listed in each journal.

If unsure of the location or date of any meeting, please ring a committee person for details.

The VCPS Annual General Meeting, usually held at Yarraville in June, provides substantial benefits for each and every member able to attend.



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Utricularia adamsii



Utricularia fulva



Utricularia limosa



Utricularia lasiocaulis



Byblis aquatica



Utricularia linearis



Drosera falconeri



Drosera darwinensis