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Endangered plants and animal found

Three species of rare and threatened native vines and a lizard have been discovered outside of Townsville.

The saxicoline sun skink was recently found on a mountain in Nome, near Alligator Creek.

Two of the three native vines; Mt Stuart Dutchman's pipe, William's tylophora and Dietrich's morning glory are not known to any other areas of Australia.

They were discovered by NQ Dry Tropics during assessments on private properties.

Property owners are participants of natural resource management group NQ Dry Tropics' Healthy Habitat project.

Landholder Craig Scholz said, "I'm thrilled about the 10 feet high Dietrich's morning glory and little skinks. I had no idea what was on my property but now I know what native trees are thriving here."

Landholders have since installed identifying flags alongside the plants and lizard habitat and removed competing weeds.

The discovery of the vines was unexpected but the saxicoline sun skink had been recorded just once before on Mt Muntalunga in Nome.

Alligator Creek property owner Chris Chandler said, "I practice the habit of not knocking over anything unless I know it is a weed."

Amanda Laurie from NQ Dry Tropics said, "If you notice a plant that you've never seen before on your property you can call us and we can help you identify it."

It's good to know what common weeds look like so you're not destroying native plants."

Botanist Dr Calvert said the recent discovery of the Dietrich's morning glory is one of the largest populations of the threatened native species he's ever seen.

On this site, some of the white trumpet shaped flowering vine was entwined with lantana, a weed known to out-compete native species.

A single William's tylophora was found growing on a large exposed rock platform in Alligator Creek. It is now the southernmost recorded finding of its species.

The isolated rare species have most likely survived in these pocketed areas because they are least accessible by people and sheltered from seasonal fire zones.

The very rare Mt Stuart Dutchman's pipe, endemic only within Townsville and Magnetic Island had narrowly missed being wiped out as it was found in an area recently cleared of weeds.

There is legislation to protect rare native plants in the richly bio-diverse Townsville region.

Contact NQ Dry Tropics if you want further information about these rare and threatened species.

Our region includes the local government areas of Townsville, Charters Towers, Burdekin, Isaac, Barcaldine, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and the Whitsundays.

Media contact

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