

There are some exciting events coming up in April...

Ag.Trade.Life. April 11 and 12, Mackay Showgrounds

Backyard Explorer Workshops. April 18 and 20, CQ University

And remember to  us on Facebook for regular environmental news and local events!

A new Pioneer Landcare Facilitator

A very big welcome to Iona Flett, who started work on 11 March as the Pioneer Regional Landcare Facilitator. We were fortunate that Iona started immediately after Claire left us to work on Reef Catchments' Coastal program, so we have minimal disruption to our programs. This is very timely, in particular as we are just now signing agreements with the Queensland Government for a number of projects that Iona will manage.

Iona has a background in environmental science and brings with her some very interesting experience from around the world. Already she is proving to be a valuable member of our team. As you know the Landcare Facilitator is employed by Reef Catchments but sits in our office, so she helps us maintain a close working relationship with our regional group.

I take this opportunity to say goodbye and thanks to Claire; but she has not moved far and we will be working with her in the future. We have a busy year ahead and a great team to deliver our programs. Next month we will move into larger office, supplied by Mackay Regional Council – more about that in the next newsletter.

Margaret Lane, Chair



*Iona in the nursery
Image: K. Steel*

Meet Iona

Hello! I'm your new Regional Landcare Facilitator, and I'm really excited to be joining the team.

Claire, Kate, Margaret and Wendy have worked hard to get me up to speed on the many great projects that PCL is involved with. I've met

lots of engaged, informed community members already and I hope to stay as busy as I've been in the first two weeks!

About my background: I grew up in Sydney and originally studied Earth and Environmental Science. I travelled a bit, worked in Scotland, then made Canberra home. I was involved in research at ANU on past human impact on the environment, then worked for the Department of Environment in 2009. I've just returned to Australia after a stint working in education and community development on the Thai-Burma border, and then 18 months doing a Master's in Resource Management (Coastal and Marine, with a focus on sustainable aquaculture) in Iceland.

So, lots of different experiences, but now I'm keen to settle in Mackay and get to know the people, places and plants that make the area special. Also, I like to dive, sail, hike and camp so let me know if you have a spare spot on an adventure sometime!

March Activities

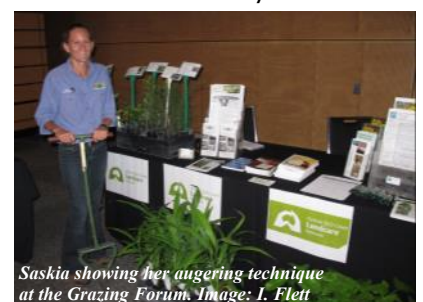
Thanks to everyone who attended PCL's first General Meeting for 2013. We had a good turnout and some very informative speakers, plus it was a good chance for Kate and Iona to meet some members. Ellen Roberts and Steve Bulloch from Communities Protecting our Region provided some interesting information about the possible community impacts of the Dudgeon Point Coal Port proposal, and Carolyn Thompson from Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority discussed what Local Marine Advisory Committees do locally and how they provide a voice for the region at state and federal government levels. Kate Steel also did a good job outlining all the new and ongoing projects PCL is currently involved with.

It was great to hear the interesting discussions sparked by the presentations. The meeting's success has inspired us to plan another General Meeting for June. If members have particular topics they would like to hear presented, please contact the office to let us know.

On March 13, your local Landcare Facilitators attended the Reef Rescue Grazing Forum which attracted around 150 graziers. There was lots of interest in our stall, where we discussed the best plants to use for riparian revegetation, and gave away young *Brachychiton*, *Cordyline* and *Lomandra* plants (grown at the PCL nursery) for property owners to try.

Thought-provoking talks were given about Reef Rescue, dung beetles, carbon farming, sustainable beef grazing and fire as a pasture management tool. Contact Iona at the PCL office to discuss any of these topics or for copies of the presentations.

PCL is also involved with the Reef Guardian schools network. We attended a networking day in March and will have more news about the program soon.



*Saskia showing her augering technique
at the Grazing Forum. Image: I. Flett*

Caring For Our Country Target Area Large Grants
 Closes 10 April www.nrm.gov.au/funding or call **1800 552 008**
FAHCSIA Volunteer Grants
 Closes 24 April www.fahcsia.gov.au or call **1800 183 374**
Junior Landcare
 Closes 10 May www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants

Plant of the month

This plant can be seen growing in the Mackay Region Botanical Gardens inside the Tropical Shade garden and in the Whitsunday Garden.

Neisosperma kilneri APOCYNACEAE

Ornate or Large-fruited Neisosperma

An attractive rainforest tree with a special significance to the Mackay district because it is only known to occur in this bioregion and is listed as vulnerable.

Description: In its natural habitat it is a tall to emergent tree. All parts have milky sap. As a garden specimen, it grows to about 8m with a dense rounded canopy. Its sweetly perfumed flowers and large red fruit make it very conspicuous in a garden setting.

Leaves: The shiny dark green leaves are paler underneath and occur in whorls of 3 or 4.

Flowers and fruit: The 5-lobed tubular flowers, similar to frangipani, are borne in showy sprays. Fruits are drupes that occur in pairs, reach the size and shape of a small hen egg and change from green to yellow, orange then red at maturity. The thin outer flesh, that is possibly toxic, covers a very hard brown bony and 'sculptured' structure (an endocarp) that encases 1-4 flat seeds.

Origin: The type specimen of *Neisosperma kilneri* was collected by Fitzalan from Mt Dryander, north of Proserpine in April 1871 and was described by Ferdinand von Mueller. It is now known to occur in a number of separate populations including the Mt Dryander and Gregory areas, Mt Blackwood and in the Koumala Range. It usually grows in well-developed rainforests on stony alluvial soils along creeks and is often locally common.

Propagation: Germination is somewhat unpredictable. Cleaned and half buried endocarps have taken from a few weeks to years for the first seedling to germinate. However, once germinated, they perform very well in cultivation, flowering and fruiting when quite young. Some trees in the MRBG were already flowering just 12 months after they were planted.

Source: Champion, I. (1997) *The Neisosperma Narrative*, Mackay SGAP; Forster, P.I. (1993) *A taxonomic revision of Neisosperma Raf (Apocynaceae) in Australia*. *Austrobaileya* Vol 4 No 1 and I. Champion's personal records. Images: Pearson and Pearson, *Australian Flora* 2008



Weed of the month

There are anecdotal reports that this weed and its close relative, Cinderella Weed (Synedrella nodiflora) are rapidly increasing in both numbers and distribution within this region.

Calyptocarpus vialis ASTERACEAE

Creeping Cinderella Weed, Straggler Daisy

Description: An annual or short lived perennial herb, with weak, often sprawling (or straggling), thin hairy reddish stems to 60cm.

Leaves: Oppositely arranged, hairy and pale green. They are oval to triangular, 15-40 x 8-25mm, with serrated margins, a pointed tip, and with the base tapering abruptly to the stalk, 5-11mm long.



Calyptocarpus vialis
 Image: Donald Simpson, 2011
 Source: Some Magnetic Island Plants

Flowers and fruit: The flowers are daisies, 5-10mm long, with bright yellow centres and yellow 'petals'. Flowers may be single or arranged in a group, usually at the tips of the stems. The 'seeds' are 3-4mm long, compressed with a warty texture and two barbed or scaly awns.

The problem: It is easily spread in garden waste, as well as by water and contaminated soil. Originally from the Southern USA and Mexico, it is now found in many tropical and subtropical places. Commonly found in canefields and gardens, it will tolerate shade and drought, and take over lawns. It is common along roads and footpaths; that's why its latin species name means 'of the roads'!



Calyptocarpus vialis
 Image: Robert Whyte
 Source: Save Our Waterways Now

Sources: Stanley & Ross Vol2, p 560 Weeds in Australian Cane Fields; BSES Bulletin, October 1989, no. 32, p. 16;

http://www-public.jcu.edu.au/discovernature/weedscommon/JCUDEV_011580; http://www.saveourwaterwaysnow.com.au/01_cms/details_pop.asp?ID=1189;
<http://www.somemagneticislandplants.com.au/index.php/plants/264-calyptocarpus-vialis>

What's happening at Reliance Creek?

Local landholder Laurence Bonaventura has watched the changes in the vegetation along Reliance Ck on his property and in the small Reliance National Park next door over many years. He has seen how a major weed, Cat's Claw Creeper, covers the canopy causing significant threat in times of heavy rain and wind. But he has also seen how hard work by National Parks and community volunteers, including himself, can help save the forest.



Image: Cat's Claw Creeper at Reliance Creek (C.Bartron)

Cat's Claw Creeper is a class 3 declared weed in Qld. It invaded the Reliance Creek Palm Vine Forest and neighbouring land as a garden escapee. It is very fast growing, smothering vegetation and capable of pulling down trees. Without the efforts of volunteers, the palm vine forest at Reliance Creek would have been pulled down years ago, but there is still more work needed. In early 2012, Pioneer Catchment and Landcare received a grant to help ramp up the program with private landholders and project partners to undertake weed control and revegetation activities for three years. The project aims to treat large canopy vines by cutting



Image: Cat's Claw Creeper cut and poisoned (C.Bartron)

and treating with herbicide, as well as poisoning roots and tubers. The Conservation Volunteers Australia team in Mackay have started this work with good effect.

Work will continue as soon as this wet season is over, with further treatment of tree and ground plants through herbicide application and re-assessment of the biological control agent effect. The Tingid bug is having some impact in the understorey, and this will make the long-term control of the vine much easier.

The Reliance Ck project is funded by the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future Biodiversity Fund.

Easter Bunnies (and other pests)

We all know that in Australia, the only good rabbit is a chocolate rabbit, but what other pest species are in our area, and what can be done about them?



The scientists at Biosecurity Queensland remind us that many *pest* animals in other places were introduced as *pets*. That's why there are strict controls on which animals can be imported and kept.

You can help! If you ever go fishing, keep an eye out for the noxious fish species that can harm native fish populations and impact water quality. Report pest fish; you are NOT allowed to take them home or release them. www.daff.qld.gov.au or 1800 017 116.

The Canegrowers' **Ag.Trade.Life.** show will be a great time to find out about agricultural pests. The Mackay Regional Pest Management Group's Pest Education Trailer will be there with council officers and biosecurity staff on hand to provide information about weeds and feral animals including *Lantana*, sickle pods, feral pigs and wild dogs. PCL will also be there giving away (non-pest) trees!

Mackay Showground, April 11 and 12, \$6 Adults or \$10 for 2 days.

Coastcarers come out at the Northern Beaches Claire Bartron



Image: Volunteer Bernard clearing Guinea Grass at Bucasia (C.Bartron)

A mix of dedicated volunteers and new faces kicked off the 2013 Coastcare Activities at Bucasia and Eimeo. The Bucasia Beach site is a coastal dune, requiring suitable vegetation to help it form and stabilise. The roots of the new plants will grow and help to bind the sand, creating conditions that encourage the establishment of other plant communities.

At Eimeo Creek, Mother-in-law's Tongue was the main target - it can form dense stands and out-compete native vegetation. Cottonwood (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), a native to the region, was used to revegetate this site. Cottonwood is a hardy, salt and wind resistant tree which grows quickly, stabilising soils and creating a wind break. Perfect for revegetation!

The next Coastcare Activities include cleaning up at Blacks Beach Spit, where illegal dumping has become a problem. Mackay Regional Council has removed the larger dumped materials, but much of the small debris remains. All Coastcarers are welcome to Blacks Beach Spit on April 13.



Backyard Biodiversity

Did you notice all those beautiful blue butterflies flying around a couple of weeks ago? They were Blue Tigers, a common species that migrates in vast numbers and is often seen around Easter time in Mackay. Blue Tigers are known to be attracted to *Melaleuca*, *Buckinghamia* and *Parsonsia* species, and their caterpillars, which have black and white stripes, like to eat the corky milk vine, *Secamone elliptica*.

The number and type of insects, spiders and other 'creepy crawlies' gives a good indication of the biodiversity, and therefore ecosystem health, of your property. It can also be really fun to collect, identify and learn about the animals you find.



From April 17-20, the Central Queensland Landcare Network is holding a series of workshops with Queensland Museum entomologist Dr Christine Lambkin. Schools are invited to the daytime sessions, and community members are welcome to attend the afternoon workshops from 3.30 to 6pm (Mackay workshop Thursday April 18) or all day Saturday April 20 at the Mackay CQU campus.

Participants will get to try trapping, preserving and identifying insects, ask questions, and find out how to become a Backyard Explorer! More information from Landcare officers.

Sources: Maya Harrison, MRBG; Queensland Museum; Image: C. Bartron



Upcoming Events

APRIL

Thursday 4, 7.30pm - SGAP General Meeting. *Common Reptiles and Amphibians Found in Your Garden* talk by Paul Horner, Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court

Saturday 6, 8.00am - Morag McNichol Reserve Working Bee. Contact Jim McNichol, 4942 8802

Sunday 7, 6.15am - Birdlife Mackay Outing. Wetlands Walkabout, Meet at Keeley's Road, Slade Point. Contact 4952 2964

Thursday 11 and Friday 12, 9am-6.00pm - Ag. Trade. Life. Trade Exhibition at Mackay Showground, Milton Street, Mackay. Entry \$6

Saturday 13, Coastcare Activities:

9am-11am Ball Bay - Meet at the end of Buoro Street.

2pm-4pm Blacks Beach - Meet at the end of Pacific Drive

Contact Claire, claire.bartron@reefcatchments.com, 0429 155 841

Saturday 13, 8.30am - Friends of the MRBG Planting Bee. Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. Meet at the Meadowlands Ampitheatre. Wear covered shoes. Morning tea provided. Contact 4952 7300

Wednesday 17, 7.30am - SGAP MRBG Regional Forest Planting Bee. Contact Irene Champion, 4955 1745, for more information.

Thursday 18 and Saturday 20, Backyard Explorer Workshops. Central Queensland University, Boundary Rd, Mackay. Contact iona.flett@reefcatchments.com for more information and bookings.

Friday 19, 9am - 2pm, Rainbow Warrior. Free tours of the ship. Details at www.greenpeace.org/australia/en/rainbow-warrior-2013/

MAY

Thursday 2, 7.30pm - SGAP General Meeting, *Maya's Creatures* talk by Maya Harrison, Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court

Thursday 3 to Monday 6, Winter Moon Festival. Turn off Bruce Hwy at Calen.

Sunday 5, 6.15am - Birdlife Mackay Outing to Berri Werri; meet at Tourist Info Centre, Nebo Rd, Mackay for travel to Gargett

FOR THE DIARY: Land For Wildlife Field Day at Padaminka in early June; more information in the next issue...

Check our website for more events and updates!

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OUR
COUNTRY

PIZZA OVEN CONSTRUCTION WORKSHOP

Mackay Community Garden Inc. presents a weekend workshop to be held on the **20th and 21st April** from 9.00am to 3.00 pm. This is a unique opportunity to learn the ancient art of construction of a wood fired pizza oven. The cost of \$45 includes the workshop with morning tea and lunch on both days.

For bookings and enquiries contact:

Celeste on **0409 491 237**

celeste63@mcs.net.au or Nicole on

4958 3310 nicole@bushcamp.net or

check the website for details and a map www.permaculturemackay.org

Who's who at Pioneer Catchment & Landcare

Management Committee

Chair Margaret Lane (SGAP—Mackay Branch)

Deputy Chair Dave Hunter

Treasurer Dianne Williams

Secretary (Non voting) Wendy Eiteneuer

Committee Members Irene Champion,

Di Salau, Cr Theresa Morgan, John Atkinson

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