

Queensland Landcare Awards... Part 2 Article by M.Lane

Nominations for Qld Landcare Awards closed early July. Our August newsletter profiled Mackay Regional Council, nominated for the 'Partnerships with Landcare' Award. Four more nominations are profiled in this newsletter. Winners will be announced at the Qld Landcare Conference in Warwick, 27-29 September. State winners will compete for the Australian Landcare Awards next year.

Annette and Dennis Werner and their son John are nominated by Reef Catchments for a Landcare **Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices Award**. This award recognises individuals and groups who have used innovation to make a significant contribution to both sustainable agriculture and farm productivity. The Werner family provide leadership in their community and have a long history of involvement with Landcare and local research initiatives.

In an industry where yield decline is the subject on everyone's lips the family has lifted their sugarcane productivity from 75–80 tonne/ per hectare to 85–90 tonne per hectare in just five years. They maintain that the increase is related to whole system improvements, including their work with mill mud, subsurface application of fertilisers, improved herbicide and irrigation management and wider rows with controlled traffic. The Werner's methods frequently allow them to get a higher number of ratoons than most other growers. This has economic benefit, as planting sugarcane is the most expensive and intensive component of the farming cycle.



Talking compost with the Werners.
Image: M.Lane

The family embraces new ideas and technology and is involved with a number of research programs, often providing their property, time and machinery for trials. "The people who try new ideas are the ones who can move forward. You need to change yourself before change changes you", says Dennis of the family's commitment to research and innovation.

Sarina Rural Skills Centre is nominated by Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association (SLCMA) for the **Junior Landcare Team Award**. The nomination recognises the collaborative effort of the Sarina Rural Skills Centre and Sarina State High School (SSHS) Agricultural Department, who operate the Sarina Rural Skills Centre as an innovative rural training facility for students and the community to increase knowledge and understanding of practical and innovative land management activities.



Aquaponics at SRSC
Image: Sv.Fahland

The diverse activities range from aquaponics, hydroponics and permaculture to animal husbandry, bee keeping, worm farms and composting. These activities contribute to reducing off-farm impacts through use of a sediment basin to collect surface water run-off, water quality monitoring and improving biodiversity through by establishing native plants and integrated pest management.

Together, the Sarina Rural Skills Centre and SSHS Ag Department have a long history of working in partnership with SLCMA on various Landcare projects, youth educational and community awareness raising activities both at the centre and out in the community. This is achieved through school activity days and community field days as well as assistance with community projects such as the construction of floating aquaponic units to reduce blue-green algae outbreaks in local dams and fencing projects.

The Sarina Rural Skills Centre is an asset to both the Sarina youth and community and is a great example of what can be achieved through the collaboration and partnerships between community groups and individuals.

Mackay and District Turtle Watch Association (MTDWA) is nominated for the **Coastcare Award** by Reef Catchments. This award is presented for excellence in activities that have contributed to the significant improvement of local and/or marine environments.

Marine turtles are globally endangered and the Mackay coast is one of Australia's key sites for Flatback and Green Turtles. Since 1992 members of MDTWA have worked to protect these rare and threatened animals and their habitat. MDTWA's accomplishments are extensive, with all activities undertaken entirely by a network of 60 volunteers.

Some key achievements have been:

- * Leading the development of informational turtle signage across the Mackay Whitsunday region, with 30 locations in the Mackay region.
- * Undertaking a targeted education campaign at schools across the region since 1998 (and a strong community awareness and education program)



Fay and Ken Griffin with Turtle signage. Image: K Woodcock



Ed Sidner
54 Windsor Drv
Timberlands

Plant of the month MACKAY Qld
A medium native tree with an open canopy— producing brown pods over winter. Although not an Acacia, Forest Siris is a papery relative of

***Albizia procera* MIMOSACEAE**

Forest Siris

A medium to tall semi-deciduous tree. The timber is termite resistant and useful for furniture, carving and boat construction. It is useful as a light shade tree and for revegetating in well-drained poor soils, due to its ability to fix nitrogen. Squirrel Gliders are known to feed on *Albizia* sap in our region.

Form: 15-30m, with an open, spreading canopy of dull green. The trunk is fairly straight, slender and smooth light grey-fawn in colour in younger trees. Older trees have brown roundish depressions on the trunk.

Leaves: Large, alternate, bipinnate with a large gland near the base of the primary leaf axis.

Flowers/fruits: Light yellow, fluffy flowers are produced in summer. These are followed by showy display of thin, papery red-brown pods about 25x2.5cm, that persist for some time. Pods contain 6-12 brown seeds.

Propagation: From seed.

Local habitat: Primarily found in woodland and open forests dominated by eucalypts.

Distribution: Extensive— WA to NE Queensland and overseas.

Points of interest: Has a close-grained timber, easily worked and good for building. In south-east Asia, all parts of the tree are used either medicinally, for food, fodder, building, and tool construction. Regarded locally as good cattle fodder.



Image: K Steel

Sources: SGAP Mackay Branch (1989) *One Hundred and One Trees of Mackay*. Maiden(1889) *The Useful Plants of Australia, (inc Tasmania)*

Weed spotting this month **Passion Flowers**

Community volunteers helped out at a recent day at the Far Beach revegetation site. After planting some native trees onto the dunes and mulching and watering, we got busy pulling weeds at the site. One of the prominent weeds there is Stinking Passion Flower. It's an unfortunate name as the flower is rather pretty, but...

PASSION FLOWERS Invade and threaten forest edges, creek lines, disturbed rainforest, open vegetation, coastal areas and crops. They often grow over vegetation forming a thick smothering cover that can lead to plant death.

Species prevalent in our region include *Passiflora foetida* (Stinking Passion Flower) and *Passiflora suberosa* (Corky Passion Flower)

Origin: West Indies and South America

Form: Perennial vines climbing with axillary tendrils.

Leaves: Alternate simple, margins entire or lobed.

Flowers: Typical passion flowers, 5-petalled borne singly in leaf axils.

Fruits/Seeds: Ovoid berries with numerous seeds surrounded by pulpy aril. Size and colour differs between species.

Spread by: Birds, animals, water, garden waste, contaminated soil.



P. foetida flowers and leaf. Image: K.Ward



P. suberosa flower. Image: A.Pearson

Source: "Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region"

continued from pg1...

- * Development of brochures on marine turtles in the region and threats to their survival.
- * Monitoring nesting and hatchling marine turtles on 30 beaches in the region, requiring around 8,000 volunteer hours annually. Monitoring provides a means for community engagement and ensures that campaigns are based on quantitative, local data. The result is a database with 21 years of comprehensive, scientific information.
- * Working with local groups against destruction and degradation of nesting habitat from clearing natural dune vegetation, and with police and local government to target inappropriate vehicle access on beaches.

MDTWA volunteers work continuously and tirelessly to collect and share data within partnerships with local, state, and national groups, such as the Queensland Turtle Research program. This benefits marine turtles and the greater marine and coastal environments of Mackay Region and beyond.

Beaconsfield State School is nominated for the **Junior Landcare Team Award**. The school began environmental work in 2006 when it became a Reef Guardian School. The whole school sustainability program is called *Curriculum Connections* as it seeks to connect curriculum to real life action. Students from prep to year seven study aspects of sustainability in class and take on a series of environmental projects, beginning with personal actions which they can implement in their home in the lower school, to community initiatives in the middle grades, to global issues in the upper grades. Action is taken in the areas of biodiversity, energy efficiency, waste minimisation, species protection and community education. The goal of the program is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and opportunity to take action to protect the Great Barrier Reef for future generations.

The school has 3 revegetation sites where students work. Students study habitat in class and on site and work to improve biodiversity by planting pioneer species, collecting and propagating seeds and removing weeds. Students propagate and plant over 2000 trees a year. A particular target has been protecting turtles and the school has worked in many ways to spread knowledge and improve



Beaconsfield students on the clean beach challenge

habitat. Worm farms, energy efficiency and sustainable practices are just some elements of this very successful sustainability program.

Out and About with Landcare in August ...



A volunteer with CVA wrestling with Cat's Claw Creeper. Image: K Steel

After months of delay, mostly due to a late wet season, our Conservation Volunteers Australia Team were able to continue the progress on **Cat's Claw Creeper** control in the Reliance Ck area. This is part of a \$92,000 project funded by the Federal Government Biodiversity Fund to control weeds and revegetate a critical palm vine forest habitat area.



Kim Kleidon shows off her new glider habitat cylinder. Image: K Steel

August also had Kate climbing a few trees visiting **Land for Wildlife** members along with Tina Ball from National Parks, helping land owners install PVC nest cylinders for Squirrel Gliders in suitable habitat areas. The aim is to expand the range of gliders nesting in regrowth eucalypt forest. Funded by the Mackay Regional Council.

The Great Northern Clean Up 2013

is live from 1 July. Communities north of the Tropic of Capricorn are encouraged to register for a weekend of action between 20-22 September.

Since the pilot in 2009, the event has grown by an average of 47% each year, attracting more than 20,600 volunteers who have collectively removed an estimated 1,252 tonnes of rubbish from 516 registered sites.

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare will host a clean up site along Riverside Drive on the 20th September, 9-11am.

Students from St Patrick's College will chip in and please give us a call if you too would like to volunteer, or see Mackay Regional Council's website for other clean up sites.

How important is the coast to you?

A National Environmental Research Program wants to know what you think is important for the future of our coast. Australia's national science agency, CSIRO, is leading a study to find out how people living in Mackay would like to see the coast managed in the future.



The study is exploring coastal management choices and priorities. It aims to understand the balance between local community needs, conservation and commercial uses, and where they all overlap.

Have your say by participating in an online survey.

To access the survey follow the link at www.csiro.au/gbr-mse

or contact:

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

T: 07 4951 3454

E: gbr-mse@csiro.au

W: www.csiro.au/gbr-mse

This work is being undertaken as part of the *National Environmental Research Program (NERP) Tropical Ecosystems Hub* with the help from the Mackay Local Marine Advisory Committee to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, with a small group of local volunteers. *The Australian Government funds the NERP to inform evidence-based policy and sustainable management of the Australian environment.*

Upcoming Events

SEPTEMBER—IS BIODIVERSITY MONTH!

Fridays, 9.30am—Free Guided Walk at Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

Wednesday 4, 9-12pm — Finch Hatton Gorge Weed Identification Day, The Gorge Kiosk. Morning tea provided.

Thursday 5—SGAP General Meeting—Spring Show and Tell. Contact 4942 6671

Saturday 7, 8am-10am— Morag McNichol Reserve Working Bee. Contact: Joyce on 4955 0153.

Saturday 14, 9-11am Community Coastcare actions at Ball Bay, meet at end of Buoro St. **2-4pm** at Eimeo Ck, meet at end of Graham Cr.

Friday 20, 9-11am—Great Northern Clean-Up. Join Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group in cleaning up Riverside Drive.

Saturday 21— Society for Growing Australian Plants SALE at the Mackay Orchid Extravaganza, Queens Park. 10am-3pm.

September 27 to 29— Kate away at the Queensland Landcare Conference - Warwick, Qld.

OCTOBER

Fridays, 9.30am—Free Guided Walk at Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

Thursday 3—SGAP general meeting, Botanical Gardens update. Contact 4942 6671.

Saturday 5—Mackay Bluewater Ecofest. See MRC website for details

Sunday 6 —Birdlife Mackay outing to Eungella. Contact 4952 2964

Saturday 10—Morag McNichol Reserve Working Bee. Contact: Joyce on 4955 0153.

Update to the Owen's Creek Engineered Log Jam Project:

We have successfully located all the logs with root balls we need for the project from the Bloomsbury area. Thankfully the felled trees will be repurposed and go towards an environmental improvement project.

Thanks for those who called in with ideas and contacts. We anticipate doing similar works in the future, so please keep this in mind when you are travelling around our region!

WetlandCare Australia

invites photographers of all ages to enter the Photography Prize.

Exhibit your work in Townsville, and celebrate World Wetlands Day on 2 February 2014.

Entries close: **Friday December 7 2013**

For more information contact:

Liz Hajenko WetlandCare Australia

T: 1800 816 147

Email: entries@wetlandcare.com.au

FINAL REMINDER

Membership renewals are due.

Please contact the PCL office if

you haven't received your renewal notice.



Landcare Week 2nd-8th September 2013

Please note: the Pioneer Catchment & Landcare office will be closed during the week 23-27 September, with office open on Tuesdays and Thursdays only from 30 Sept to 19 October 2013

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