

### A local Community Day out - Marian Riverbank and Owen's Ck

In the last 12 months, Pioneer Catchment and Landcare together with Marian Community Working Group, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Mackay Regional Council and private contractors have cleared the Leucaena, Guinea Grass and other environmental weeds in an area adjacent to Melba House on the riverbank at Marian. The site has been transformed from being weed dominated to a river bank under restoration.

Saturday 29th March was a typical working bee day for the Marian Community Working Group. We arrived at 8am with the main activities for the day being:

- ☆ Target to plant 150 upper bank species into prepared area – achieved. 400 in total are now planted,
- ☆ Expand revegetation area through weed control - Ray Greaves chain sawing further areas of Leucaena on the lower slope,
- ☆ Maintain existing revegetation area through expanded mulch application and weed removal - hand pulling was really easy in the soft ground after good rain.
- ☆ Rubbish pick up along whole site – only approx. 5kg rubbish removed. It's a tidy area!

The working bee followed very good local rainfall on the site in the previous week, providing a perfect planting environment. It was also therefore extremely humid and difficult working conditions for everyone.

The Marian Community Group are active and keen to see this project a success, and the participants put in a great effort in the two hour working bee.

We finished with morning tea at 10am on the veranda at Melba House, and then a number of the participants were joined by more locals on the Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Community Riparian Bus Trip to Owen's Ck. Travelling to Owen's Ck, via Gargett the group enjoyed a walk through private property to inspect the Engineered Log Jam (ELJ) and revegetation work on the creek there.

Iona Flett from Reef Catchments provided technical information on the bus trip, discussing other projects occurring in the area, including viewing a rock revetment site upstream of the Engineered Log Jam.



It's not all hard work! (K Steel)

ELJ site signage (K Steel)



After a walk around the site, we discussed the project features, issues and progress, and inspected the site signage that is to be installed. The Landowner joined us on site to discuss his input to the project. We finished our Community Day out with a tasty lunch prepared by the Marian Community Group ladies, served on the creek bank.

Both the Melba House Revegetation and the ELJ projects are supported by funds from the State Government's "Everyone's Environment Grants"

Lunch on Owen's Creek (K Steel)



### **Looking for LOCAL NATIVE PLANTS?**

### **DON'T MISS THE FARLEIGH SCHOOL PALM FETE!**

*Each year The Society for Growing Australian Plants sell healthy, robust and locally grown native plants—perfect for revegetation or garden specimens.*

**Sunday 18th May, from 9am.**

**And come talk to the Pioneer Landcare staff about habitat, weed management and revegetation options.**



## Plant of the month

## *Mallotus philippensis*

### Red Kamala

This is a fast growing dense plant useful for windbreaks or screening. The timber has been used for flooring.

**FAMILY:** Euphorbiaceae

**HABIT:** A large bushy shrub to small tree with a smooth brown trunk.

**LEAVES:** Simple, alternate, ovate, long stemmed, 6-20cm long, tapering to a point at the apex. They are dark green above and dull beneath with numerous tiny red glands and whitish hairs. Venation is raised on the underside with three distinct basal veins.

**FLOWER/FRUITS:** Brownish flowers are borne on short spikes. Female flowers are followed by three lobed capsules, with a dark red, powdery covering. The dehiscent capsules mature during autumn and contains three black seeds.

**PROPAGATION:** Fresh seed.

**LOCAL HABITAT:** Dry rainforest, littoral rainforest and often common in regrowth.

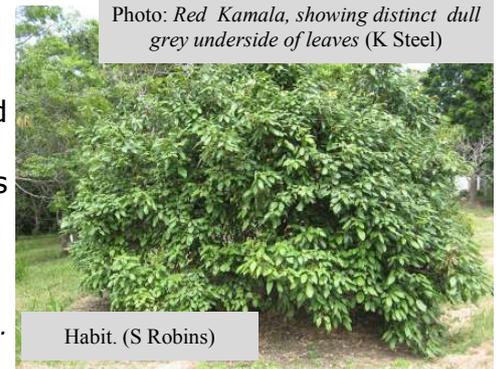
**DISTRIBUTION:** Eastern Australia from north Queensland to northern New South Wales. Also Papua and eastern Asia.

**GENERAL:** A golden-red dye for silk can be made from the red powdery covering of the fruits.

A bug, bright red in colour, is often found in large tight clusters and have been observed eating the covering of the fruit.



Photo: Red Kamala, showing distinct dull grey underside of leaves (K Steel)



Habit. (S Robins)

References: Alcock & Champion, 1989 *One Hundred and One Trees of Mackay*.

Nicholson & Nicholson, 1996 *Australian Rainforest Plants*.

## Weed spotting this month

## *Rottboellia cochinchinensis*

### Itch Grass, a highly invasive pest plant that is making it's way into our district

This erect, profusely tillering annual grass grows up to a height of 4m or more and is extremely competitive with annual crops, readily invading disturbed sites along roads and railways. In our region, it is being seen to emerge after cane paddocks have laid fallow or converted to pasture. From afar, a patch may resemble a pale area of guinea grass.

However, a close look at Itch Grass, reveals brace roots near the base of the plant, a cylindrical spikelet seed head and siliceous hairs on the leaf sheath that can penetrate and irritate the skin.

Individual plants produce 2,000-16,000 seeds that are shed as soon as they mature.

It is a native of Indo-China, and is naturalised throughout the tropics. Itch Grass is prominent in the Burdekin and is making its way south. The most successful prevention strategy is to stop the spread between farms. All machinery entering and leaving a farm enterprise should be cleaned and be free of loose dirt and any other material that may harbour itch grass seeds. If you think you have this invasive pest, please contact Biosecurity, Landcare or Reef Catchments, who are currently working on a control program in the Mackay area.

Individual plants produce 2,000-16,000 seeds that are shed as soon as they mature. It is a native of Indo-China, and is naturalised throughout the tropics. Itch Grass is prominent in the Burdekin and is making its way south. The most successful prevention strategy is to stop the spread between farms. All machinery entering and leaving a farm enterprise should be cleaned and be free of loose dirt and any other material that may harbour itch grass seeds. If you think you have this invasive pest, please contact Biosecurity, Landcare or Reef Catchments, who are currently working on a control program in the Mackay area.



Robust roots and prominent siliceous hairs on the Itch Grass leaf base (J. Shiels)

References: *Invasive species compendium at www.cabi.org; BSES 2012*

# Reducing the impact of weeds on the Reliance Creek



This project aims to extensively reduce Cat's Claw Creeper (*Macfadyena unguis-cati*) & eradicate *Hymenachne* (*Hymenachne amplexicaulis*) in Reliance Creek National Park & adjoining properties, with revegetation, monitoring & control to ensure long-term health of the rainforest.

From 2012 to 2015, Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group is working collaboratively with local government, neighbouring landholders & National Park managers to assist them with advice & on-ground support. Conservation Volunteers and private contractors are doing the hard work.

Reliance Creek National Park and adjoining properties contain approx 35ha of endangered palm-dominated lowland rainforest (RE's 8.3-1, 8.3-5).



Cat's Claw Creeper is prevalent, taking over the canopy. *Hymenachne* infestations are sporadic but persistent, preventing natural recruitment.

## Our approach is to attack the Cat's Claw vine 3 ways:

**STUMP CUTTING** – sever the stems growing up the trees, and apply a systemic chemical to the base of the vine.

**FOLIAR SPRAY** – new vine growth around the tree bases sprayed with Glyphosate.

**BIOLOGICAL CONTROL** – a Leaf sucking tingid (moth) (*Carvalhotingis visenda*) has been introduced to the site and is active in feeding on leaf tissue of the vine. The tingid is highly host specific, and is causing visible feeding damage. The tingid is good at reducing the health of the plant although it is limited in its ability to eradicate the weed.



Hundreds of native seeds are being collected to be part of a revegetation program to help strengthen the forest from future weed invasion and improve the connectivity of local remnants.



## Landcare project activities in April 2014...

Below — new Land For Wildlife member, Kerry Dempsey, has a small block holding in the Farleigh area. Accessing the Land for Wildlife program will help Kerry understand the values and threats to the native vegetation and habitat on her property. Already Kerry and her husband have removed numerous Penny Leaf trees and Lantana, and started the process of revegetating with local native trees, shrubs and grasses.

Kerry is also an active volunteer with the Pioneer Landcare Group, helping produce thousands of plants in the volunteer nursery program.



Above — As the wet season draws to an end, we are getting ready to continue the weed control work at Reliance Ck National Park. With the help of Conservation Volunteers Australia, there are many hectares of Cat's Claw Creeper to cut and poison. The Habana community are also invited to help the beginning of a large revegetation project. We plan to plant around 1000 local native species into gaps in the forest, such as that shown in the photo. However, the site is still very wet and now has fallen trees from 2 cyclones, blocking access. It also shows that nature never goes to plan!

## Upcoming Events

### May

- Sunday 4** — Birdlife Mackay outing to Sandringham Reserve Contact 4959 3382
- Friday 9**—CLIMATE RISK IN THE COASTAL ZONE Science Forum at CQU Mackay. Contact 4968 4200
- Saturday 17**— Coastal Revegetation Working Bees at Ball Bay (9am) and Bucasia (2pm). Contact 0429 155 841
- Sunday 18** — Farleigh Palm Fete
- Sat-Sunday 24-25** —Mackay Coastal Clean-up (Southern sites) with Eco-Barge Clean Seas. Contact 4946 5198
- Fri-Saturday 23-24**—AgTradeLife "Powering the Future" expo at Mackay Showgrounds
- Wednesday 28** — Mackay Youth Leadership and Sustainability Summit. CQU Mackay. Contact 0423 044 431
- Saturday 31**—Morag McNichol Reserve Working Bee Contact 4955 0153

### June

- Sunday 1** — Birdlife Mackay outing to Padaminka Reserve Contact 4959 3382
- Thursday 5** - SGAP meeting, Biodiversity and Special Plants of CQCB, Grant Paterson. Contact 4954 8176
- Sunday 15**— Pioneer Valley Show, Finch Hatton

### PCL welcomes two new Management Committee members

**Caitlin Davies** is the Regional Manager for Conservation Volunteers Australia and joins us as a regular member.

**Rod Hall** works with Reef Catchments NRM group and is undertaking the role of Treasurer.

The Committee are very grateful for new members and the wisdom and experience that Cait and Rod bring to Landcare.



St Lawrence  
**wetlands**  
weekend

Save the date: **31 May 2014**

The Isaac region's quiet coastline will burst to life with our emerging eco-festival.

Come for a drive and join us for live bush band Hullabaloo, wetlands tour and bushman's dinner, arts workshops, market stalls and fresh local produce. Free camping/ caravan facilities close by.

**Keen photographer?** Enter the 'Colours of Isaac' photography competition – open until 19 May. Win great prizes! **Theme: Isaac inspires me because...**

For all event and competition details go to [www.isaac.qld.gov.au/wetlands-weekend](http://www.isaac.qld.gov.au/wetlands-weekend)

**MISAAC**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
[www.isaac.qld.gov.au](http://www.isaac.qld.gov.au) 1300ISAACS (1300 47 22 27)

#### Pioneer Catchment Office contacts:

Ph: 4944 1979

[www.pioneercatchment.org.au](http://www.pioneercatchment.org.au)

**Project Manager:** Kate Steel, 0447 749 769

[projectmanager@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:projectmanager@pioneercatchment.org.au)

**Office Manager:** Wendy Eiteneuer, 0427 543 509

[admin@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:admin@pioneercatchment.org.au)

**Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group**  
Proudly supported by:



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY



Australian Government  
Department of the Environment



**Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News**  
May 2014

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA

If unable to be delivered please return to

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare  
Group Inc.  
PO Box 1076  
MACKAY Qld 4740