

“Watch the Flow of Your H2O” Campaign: myh2o



Increasing public awareness of the region’s demand for water and how to “watch the flow of your H2O” drives the Mackay Regional Council’s campaign and it’s associated myh2o dashboard; an interactive water consumption reporting tool where homeowners, tenants, and rental agencies can register their properties and track their water usage.

Registering your property is easy; residents can track their daily usage and even compare it to similar properties. Users can register for water leak notifications, view water usage charts and water meter estimates. The website is useful and easy to follow with water saving tips and additional informational on your water consumption. Find ways to reduce your home water usage on: <https://myh2o.qld.gov.au/>

Sustainable Grazing Forum 2016

This annual event was held on 16th March at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre and followed by field day on 17th. There was a good attendance of local and distant farmers from as far away as Richmond. Presentation on Soil Erosion (Bill Thompson), Beef Genetics (Dr Brian Burns) and Seasonal Forecasting (Neil Cliffe) were very well received and if you were unable to attend but know someone who did, a USB memory stick of their presentations was included in the conference ‘goodie’ bag and highly recommended.

There was no positive information on Giant Rats Tail Grass control from either Biosecurity or Reef Catchments/Farmacist local trials. However we must be getting closer, perhaps next year.

Of great interest to the forum was a presentation by Deb McLucas, President of Greater Whitsunday Food Network. If you have a curiosity about Farmers Markets either as a consumer or as a producer contact Deb on 49541724. We will soon have a local Farmers Market in Mackay.

This was a well run forum, kept on time and topic by MC Kim Kleidon. The Pest Trailer had the usual high level of interest and at the Pioneer Catchment and Landcare booth Project Officers (Laura and Melissa) were kept busy fielding questions and giving away trees.

Upcoming Events in May

FREE Compost and Work Farming Workshop

To celebrate International Composting Awareness week, Mackay Regional Council is sponsoring a free workshop aimed at highlighting the benefits of having a compost or worm farming system at home. RSVP Fiona Paterson on 4061 9051. Bookings are essential!

When: Saturday 7th May 9:00am to 11:30am

Where: Mackay Community Gardens, Streeter Avenue, West Mackay

Farleigh State School Annual Palm Fete

View the collection of palms and other plants while enjoying the friendly market environment of one of Mackay’s largest annual garden markets.

When: Sunday 15th May 7:00am to 1:00pm

Where: Farleigh State School Chidlow Street, Farleigh

Greenmount Homestead Heritage Fair

Enjoy a variety of displays and unique goods from local food vendors and artists. This year’s theme is “Sporting Costumes through the Decades”.

When: Sunday 29th May 9:00am to 3:00pm

Where: Greenmount Homestead, Walkerston

Membership Renewals

PCL membership renewal reminders will be circulated to members this month.

If you want to be a member, please contact the office on 4944 1979 for membership information and applications.

Brown Kurrajong

Family: Byttneriaceae prev. Sterculiaceae

A small tree up to 20-25m with a shady, umbrella-like canopy. A fast growing tree which is used for revegetation. It makes an attractive ornamental in its early years.

Leaves: Simple, alternate with toothed margins; broadly egg to heart-shaped, 30-150mm long, tapering to a pointed tip; dull, dark green above with scattered stellate (star-shaped) hairs; pale whitish grey below with a more downy cover of stellate hairs.

Flower: Numerous small, white 5-petalled, borne in sprays along the top of branches giving flowering trees a "snowy" appearance.

Fruit: Capsules, brown or grey-black, globular, 15-25mm in diameter, and covered in soft bristles; capsules split into five segments with one to two small, shiny, black seeds in each segment; summer to winter.

Distribution: Eastern Australia from north eastern Queensland to north eastern New South Wales and also overseas. It is a common pioneer tree of rainforest margins and clearings with occasional trees also occurring on creek banks.



Source: Melzer, R and Plumb, J., 2007, Plants of Capricornia. The Mackay Branch of The Society for Growing Australian Plants, 1989, One Hundred and One Trees of Mackay. *Paraserianthes toona*. Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants Edition 6, CSIRO, 2016.

Image: S and A Pearson, S Robins, G Williams

Weed Spotting

Momordica charantia

Balsam Pear

Family: Cucurbitaceae

Spread by animals, birds and humans. Widely naturalised; invades sugarcane crops, rainforest margins, creek bank and coastal communities, unmanaged land, roadsides and gardens.

Leaves: Alternate, simple, deeply palmately lobed into 5-7 pointed lobes with scalloped margins, orbicular in outline, 150mm across, mid-green and soft textured; stalk 30-50mm long.

Flower: Yellow with five petals, about 20mm wide, solitary male or female flowers borne on stems to 50mm long in the leaf axils.

Fruit: Fleshy reddish orange pendulous capsules, 30-120 x 20-30mm, tapered at both ends, ridged and warty; bursting open on maturity. Seeds small, black and surrounded by a scarlet-red fleshy aril.

Distribution: Native to Malaysia, it is now widespread in northern Queensland and vigorously competes with native plants.



Source: MRPMG, 2013. Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region. *Balsam Pear Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from: https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/69491/IPA-Balsam-Pear-PP134. Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Biosecurity Queensland.

Image: M Lane

Land for Wildlife



Des & Theresa Morgan have a property in the Kuttabul region that has some impressive retained habitat that includes *Eucalyptus tereticornis*.

Theresa and her family are interested in preserving the existing native flora and fauna they have whilst also encouraging more native wildlife to inhabit the property.

To date, they have been working towards removing sensitive weed and lantana both mechanically and manually to provide the best environment for the forest to regenerate naturally.

A site inspection was conducted in March and a Land Management Plan is being devised to assist them in their goals.



Peri-urban Expression of Interest

Have you encountered some erosion issues on your property lately, or suspicious looking plants have suddenly appeared? PCL is offering small landholders within the Pioneer Catchment free property visits and land management advice through the Peri-urban project funded by the Everyone's Environment Grant.

The project is being delivered in partnership with the Central Queensland Coast Landcare Network focusing on building resilience within peri-urban hotspots throughout the Sarina, Mackay and Whitsunday Regions.

The project is now in its third and final year and provides support for landholders to undertake better land management practices by providing resources and technical advice through free property visits, access to land management resources and native plants for revegetation.

Participating landholders will receive a personalised prioritised action plan for their property and 40 free native tube stock plants to assist in the revegetation.

If you have a property between two and fifty acres within the Pioneer Catchment and would like to participate, please ring the office on 4944 1979 for more information.

If you have old batteries lying around...

Drop off old or used batteries, any size from coin to heavy equipment, to Batterypro. They have two locations: Cemetery Rd Mackay and Carl St Rural View. www.a1batterypro.com.au

PENGUIN THE MAGPIE

Featured on the ABC News, this is a story about an injured magpie chick who was rescued by a loving family. She was later named Penguin, and her story can be found at: <http://www.penguinthemagpie.com/>.

You can see photos of Penguin at: <https://www.instagram.com/penguinthemagpie/>.

Penguin's story is so popular that a book has been written by Bradley Trevor Greive, with ABC books donating 10% of all royalties from *Penguin Bloom* to Spinal Cure Australia. <https://shop.abc.net.au/products/penguin-bloom-pbk>

Nursery Activities Update

Our nursery volunteers have had a busy start to the year sowing seeds and potting up plants for different projects in the region. We are working with MRC to help build the nursery seed bank. If you have trees from which you are able to collect we would greatly appreciate donations. Seeds need to be collected from naturally occurring remnant vegetation sites. Please refer to the seed collecting checklist. In particular, we are after *Eucalyptus* and *Corymbia* species. If you would like join in with our volunteers on Tuesday mornings, please contact Carla.

Seed Collecting Checklist

The Mackay Natural Environment Centre is seeking seeds from a number of local native plants. Please refer to the checklist, attached as a separate document to this newsletter.

Upcoming Events

April

Thursday 4 - Native Plants QLD-SGAP Mackay general meeting at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens from 7:30pm ph: 49551745

Saturday 9 - Birdlife Mackay, Monthly Count Programme at Shellgrit Creek at 11:15am ph: 0488315757

Monday 18 - International Day for Monuments and Sites: <http://heritage-week.govspace.gov.au/more-information/>

Tuesday/Wednesday 26-27 - 3rd Annual Marian Soil Health Field Day RSVP Simon Mattsson ph: 0417862979

Friday 29 - Birdlife Mackay monthly survey at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens ph: 49420675

May

Sunday 1 - Birdlife Mackay outing, meet at tourist info centre at 0630 ph: 49593382

Thursday 4 - Native Plants QLD-SGAP Mackay general meeting at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens from 7:30pm ph: 49551745

Saturday 7 - Birdlife Mackay, Monthly Count Programme at Shellgrit Creek at 10:15am ph: 0488315757

Saturday 7 - FREE Mackay Regional Council Compost and Worm farming Workshop; bookings essential RSVP Fiona Paterson on ph: 4061 9051 or register your interest on council website: http://www.mackay.qld.gov.au/services/waste/worm_farms_and_composting

Sunday 15 - Farleigh State School Annual Palm Fete 7am to 1pm

Wednesday 25 - Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve monthly meeting from 4:30pm ph: 49550153

Friday 27 - Birdlife Mackay monthly survey at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens ph: 49420675

Sunday 29 - Greenmount Heritage Fair 2016

Next Month...

In our upcoming newsletter, PCL will feature a story on the Greater Whitsunday Food Network (GWFN) farmers market, which will encompass local produce from local farmers. Exciting beginnings are predicted for this authentic farmers market...find out more next month.

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. Management Committee

Chair: Dave Hunter

Vice-Chair: Di Salau

Treasurer: Mark Radke

Committee Members:

Irene Champion Jock Hansen

Dianne Williams

Grant Howard

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Mackay Natural Environment Centre Seed Collecting Checklist

1. Check with PCL to see if seed are required before seed collecting.
2. Collect from naturally occurring remnant vegetation sites.
3. Identify the plant.
 - Don't collect seed if you don't know what the tree is.
 - Plants may be prickly or itchy. Do you need PPE?
 - Are the seeds mature?
4. Fill out the seed data collection form or sticker or just write on the paper bag and take a photo.
 - Botanic name
 - Common name
 - Site where found
 - Collected by
 - Collection date
5. Pick the best!
 - Healthy, viable natural population from at least 10 widely spaced trees.
 - Do not over collect from 1 site; leave plenty of seed in the environment.
 - Collect no more than 20% of the seed off 1 plant.
 - Only collect ripe seed or seed that is mature.
 - Use sharp secateurs or long extendable loppers.
 - Don't collect seed that is insect damaged, mouldy etc.
 - Put in paper bag not plastic (unless they are fleshy fruit) with correct collecting information.
 - Try and keep the collected seed cool and dry as cooking them in a hot car may affect viability.
6. Careful not to damage the site i.e. trample understory plants/nesting sites or the plant itself.
7. Drop off at MNEC nursery or contact PCL officer Carla for pick-up arrangements.

