



3rd Annual Marian Soil Health Field Day | Recap

Simon Mattsson along with Central Queensland Soil Health Systems (CQSHS) members collaborated on yet another successful Soil Health Field Day, which took place on April 26 – 27. People in attendance represented a variety of industries including cattle, sugarcane, horticulture and grazing, with more than 90 persons in total attending either or both field days.

Day 1 included a breakfast at Souths Leagues Club and presentations, followed by an interactive Q&A panel. Guest speakers included: Dr. Greg Bender, Neil Wilson, Dr. Susanne Schmidt and David Hardwick, who together, presented thought provoking research and discussions on smarter land management, sustainable agriculture and microbial ecology.

Attendees headed to Simon Mattsson's farm for the second half of Day 1 for lime applicator demonstrations, and a hands-on soil assessment workshop hosted by David Hardwick on Day 2 – a half day well worth the trip.

Some people attended Day 1 or Day 2 only, while others attended both days. Those who went to both days were the real winners; not only did the presenters deliver great presentations, but the in-field soil assessment workshop was a useful demonstration for all farmers looking to build skills in soil management.

To recall a memorable moment – during Neil Wilson's presentation on soil microbes, he referenced Edward O. Wilson who said: "It is the little things that run the world." The takeaway point being that soil is vastly diverse and complex, and as a society we must focus on soil biology and sustainable agriculture if we are to improve soil health.

To find out more or to learn about how to become a CQSHS member you can visit: <http://cqshs.farm/>



Day 1: field demonstrations on Simon Mattsson's farm



Shelley Molloy treating a mature Rubber Vine which is growing over a Melaleuca tree.

PCL Project Review | Rubber Vine

PCL Officers and Mackay Regional Council's (MRC) Pest Management Officer, Shelley Molloy have concluded the Rubber Vine surveys for this financial year. Once again surveys were carried out on properties located in the Eton/Brightly areas of the Pioneer Valley and the project was expanded to include areas around Kinchant Dam. We located and treated a number of mature Rubber Vine plants that had seeded as well as many Rubber Vine saplings. PCL will have a Rubber Vine information display at the MAPS Field Day which will be held on Wednesday, May 25th. Make sure you come along and say hello on the day!

Rubber Vine is classified as a Weed of National Significance and Declared as a Class 2 pest. If you suspect that you have Rubber Vine on your property, please contact either Shelley Molloy from MRC or Carla Lambropoulos from PCL to arrange an inspection.

Annual Plant Sale - Native Plants Queensland Society for Growing Australian Plants (Qld Region) Inc. Mackay Branch

Where: Farleigh State School Palm Fete
When: Sunday 15 May from 8.00am to 1.00pm
Prices: Ground Orchids & Tree Ferns \$5.00 each (all other stock \$3.00 each or red spot specials \$1.00 each)

There will be a great variety of trees, shrubs, climbers and smaller plants all grown by the Mackay Branch Propagation Group whose aim is: **to grow and promote Australian Native Plants suitable for local conditions.**

A full list and notes for plants available at the sale will be circulated as soon as it is available.

Want further information?
Contact Isobel on 0418 873 379

Scaly Ash

Family: Sapindaceae

A small to medium shade tree, usually with a dense spreading crown and dark bark with large scaly flakes. Can be used for planting in coastal areas, has useful timber, and fruits are eaten by many birds.

Leaves: Pinnate, with 10-20 short stalked, alternate ovate leaflets, about 10x5cm, which are unequal sided with lateral veins looping away from the margins. They are shiny green above and paler beneath.

Flower: Tiny greenish–white flowers are borne in large sprays to about 25cm long.

Fruit: Female flowers are followed by pointed, ovoid fleshy red fruits, about 1.5cm long, containing one or occasionally two seeds.

Distribution: Occurs in northeast Queensland and southwards as far as coastal central Queensland. Altitudinal range from sea level to 450m.

Source: Mackay Branch of The Society for Growing Australian Plants, 1989, One Hundred and One Trees of Mackay. *Ganophyllum falcatum*. Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants Edition 6, CSIRO, 2016.

Image: S & A Pearson



Weed Spotting

Rivina humilis

Coral Berry/Turkey Berry

Family: Petiveriaceae prev. **Phytolaccaceae**

Perennial sub-shrub or herb to about 1m. Grows in shade; forms large colonies in rainforest. All plant parts are poisonous. This species reproduces from seed, which in turn are dispersed by birds, water, and garden waste and in contaminated soil.

Leaves: Alternate simple, lanceolate, 4-100mm long, tapering to a point, bright green, venation on upper surface slightly depressed, margins entire or toothed. Leaves are sparsely hairy and emit an unpleasant smell when damaged or crushed.

Flower: Small, green white or pink, 2-3mm long, borne in axillary or terminal racemes.

Fruit: Bright, red round berries, 3-4 x 3-4mm, each containing one brown or black seed, 2-3mm long.

Distribution: An introduced species originally from tropical America, it has naturalised in northeast Queensland and southwards as far as north-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range from sea level to 900m. Invades disturbed rainforest, vine thickets, beach scrub and creek bank communities.

Source: MRPMG, 2013. Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region. *Rivina humilis*. Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants Edition 6, CSIRO, 2016. *Weeds of Australia—Biosecurity Queensland Edition Fact Sheet: Rivina humilis*. Retrieved from: http://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/rivina_humilis.pdf. Biosecurity Queensland.

Image: M Spalding



Land for Wildlife

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare would like to welcome Michelle and Andrew Smith to the Land for Wildlife Program. Their property is located along Neilson Creek and provides connectivity to the Pioneer Peaks National Park. This national park is known for its diversity of plants and animals and features steep volcanic peaks, which were produced by volcanic eruptions 32 million years ago.



Example of the typical vegetation found along Neilson Creek.

The family has been working towards the removal of weeds on their property and increasing the sub-canopy and ground cover through planting of native species sourced from native nurseries and then propagated on the property.

Michelle is very keen on the natural environment and is particularly interested in revegetating their land with pre-clearing species. This will help to preserve and increase the native flora and encourage native wildlife to inhabit the property.

A site inspection was undertaken in April and a land management plan is being devised to assist them in their goals. The Land for Wildlife program recognises that not all people who express interest in the program have large areas or native vegetation. If you would like advice on weed removal or realising the full potential of your property, please contact our office for information on the Land for Wildlife Program.

Farmers' Market Comes to Town

People wanting to sell or source quality local food will have a new venue to trade with the establishment of an authentic farmers' market in Mackay in June this year.

The market will be run by the Greater Whitsunday Food Network Inc (GWFN), a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to showcasing the best of our local produce and helping to build a truly local food system.



Freckle Farm owner and GWFN President Deb McLucas

It is supported by Mackay Regional Council through its 2015-2016 budget, which allocated \$1.8 million to support events and conferences held from now until 2017 through the Invest Mackay Events Attraction Program and the Invest Mackay Conference Attraction Program.

GWFN President and local farmer Deb McLucas said the market will be held every Wednesday afternoon between 2:00pm and 6:00pm to ensure consumers have the chance to shop regularly for their fresh local produce

"Our market research suggests the afternoon timeslot will capture the biggest proportion of customers before and after school pick-up as well as those finishing work and shopping on their way home," Ms McLucas said.

Organisers will limit the types of stalls that will operate. "Only farmers or those value adding the produce in some way will be able to sell at the market," Ms McLucas said.

GWFN is calling for expressions of interest from potential stallholders. "We need people to contact us in order to allocate stallholder sites and process the necessary approvals."

To find out more contact Market Coordinator Christine Wilson on: 0498717941 or email markethq@greaterwhitsundayfood.org.au.

Upcoming Events

May

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: 4961 9051 or register your interest on council website: [http://](http://www.mackay.qld.gov.au/services/waste/worm_farms_and_composting)

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Monday 9 - Sunday 15 - National Volunteer Week

Sunday 15 - Farleigh State School Annual Palm Fete 8am to 1pm

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

Wednesday 25 - MAPS Field Day

Friday 27 - Reef Catchments Forestry Field Day

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

Sunday 29 - Greenmount Heritage Fair 2016

June

Thursday 2 - Native Plants QLD-SGAP Mackay general meeting at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens from 7:30pm ph: 49551745

Saturday 4 - Birdlife Mackay, Monthly Count Programme at Shellgrit Creek at 10:15am ph: 0488315757

Sunday 5 - Birdlife Mackay outing at DeMoleyn's Lagoon meet at Tourist Info Centre at 0600 ph: 07 49593382

Sunday 5 - World Environment Day 2016

What positive action will you take?

Sunday 19 - Pioneer Valley Show 2016

Next Month...

In our upcoming newsletter readers can look forward to hearing more about PCL involvement with local schools, as well as a feature story on the *Birds in Backyards* program and what a bird-friendly backyard looks like...find out more next month.

Landcare Membership Plants

Landcare membership plants are ready for pick-up at the Mackay Natural Environment Centre (MNEC) Nursery.

Tuesdays will be the designated pick-up day for members to visit the MNEC. Prior to arrival, please contact the PCL office to schedule your plant pick-up time.

As a friendly reminder, please remember to park outside of the MNEC in the designated parking area. Nursery visitors are required to wear closed-in shoes.

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc.

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