

Save the Date

Friday, August 19th

**Pioneer Catchment & Landcare
General Meeting**



Time: 9am—10:15am.

Morning tea refreshments will be provided.

Members are invited to the General Meeting which will be held at the Mackay Natural Environment Centre.

Guest speakers include Deb McLucas of Freckle Farm to speak on the Greater Whitsunday Farmers Market, and Sue McCormack, Nursery Supervisor of the Mackay Natural Environment Centre on the nursery.

**RSVP's to admin@pioneercatchment.org.au or
49441979**

National School Tree Day

On Friday, July 29th PCL volunteers and project officers Melissa Spalding and Carla Lambropoulos headed to Janes Creek for a school tree planting event sponsored by Mackay Regional Council.



On the same day, St. Francis Xavier hosted their own tree day with prep classes planting rows of Pink Evodia, Eungella Bottlebrush and Lomandra. The school has prepped the site for the last six months with weeding and mulching. Kate Finch from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) was very excited to see students planting trees, decorating the plant guards and watering these plants.



Beach Clean Up

On Saturday, July 23rd PCL facilitated a beach clean up for Mackay Kindy. Roughly ten kids and their families walked a section of Far Beach to collect nearly 17kg of rubbish. Danielle and Carolyn of Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) led the morning's adventures of collecting rubbish in all sizes, glass, plastic bottles, and even a door. The kindergarteners were switched on about why rubbish in the ocean is bad, and the difficulties marine animals have distinguishing plastics from real food. Funding for this event was received from Reef Catchments Public Fund. Mackay Kindy teachers are keen to keep beach clean ups at Far Beach an annual event.



The kids huddle around Danielle talking about the rubbish they found on the beach.

SAVE THE DATE



When: Wednesday, 31st August

Where: Demoleyns Lagoon

Bird Watching for Beginners

Daryl Barnes of BirdLife Mackay and Laura Whitbread of PCL have teamed together to host this event for those who are interested in birdwatching. Whether you have birdwatched before, or you have never done so before... join us!

Weed Swap for a Native Tree

PCL will also be hosting a *weed information and awareness* session at the same place, so if you have an unknown planting lurking in your backyard bring your possible weed in and **swap it for a native tree**.

Transport to be arranged for those who require it.

Morning tea provided.

For more information or to RSVP contact
Laura Whitbread at
laura.whitbread@pioneercatchment.org.au
or 07 4944 1979

RSVP by Monday, 29th August

Pink Evodia

Family: Rutaceae

This local beauty is moderately fast growing, has a very attractive inflorescence that attracts a large range of birds. Medium tree with distinctive white corky bark in older trees. Its seeds are eaten by pigeons and it is also a larval food plant of the Ulysses Butterfly.

Leaves: Opposite, compound with three leaflets 60-130mm, ovate to elliptic, glossy lime green with numerous oil dots visible with hand lens. Petiole 30-80mm.

Flower: Dense lateral panicles of pink flowers arising from old leaf axils, summer and autumn.

Fruit: Clusters of dark green to brown capsules, 7-8mm long with, 2-4 separate segments each containing a single black seed.

Distribution: Melaleuca swamps, on river banks and in rain forests. Fast growing, adaptable, suitable for larger gardens, tolerates poorly drained soils, flowers while young, may produce large surface roots. Qld, NSW, NT, WA, and South-east Asia.

Source: Melzer, R and Plumb, J., 2007, Plants of Capricornia. Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants Edition 6, CSIRO, 2016.

Image: S and A Pearson



Weed Spotting

Cryptostegia grandiflora

Rubber Vine

Family: Apocynaceae prev. Asclepiadaceae

A twining climber that can reach to 30m high in trees or grow as a scrambling shrub. It smothers native vegetation, forms dense thickets and reduces growth of pastures. Rubber vine has adverse affects to grazing country where heavy infestations often occur. Effects include: harbouring feral animals such as wild pigs, increasing difficulty of mustering, increasing risk of soil erosion due to decreased ground cover, preventing access of stock to water. It has milky sap and as most plants with milky sap are poisonous rubber vine is toxic to stock.

Carla of PCL and Mackay Regional Council Pest Management Officer Shelley Molloy have been in the field for treatment of Rubber Vine, a declared weed in Qld and a Weed of National Significance (WONS).

Leaves: Opposite, simple, ovate, 60-100 x 30-50mm, thick dark glossy green. Stalks often pink.

Flowers: Large tubular with five spreading lobes, about 50mm in diameter, white to pale purple; borne singly or in terminal umbels.

Fruits: Paired rigid follicles, 100-120 x 30-40mm, each with up to 450 seeds, about 8mm long and tipped with a tuft of white silky hairs, 10-35mm long.

Distribution: Rubber vine is a native of south-west Madagascar, originally brought to north Queensland as a ornamental in mining settlements. It is now widely naturalised in tropical and subtropical parts of the world, including Queensland.

Note: Rubber Vine containment lines are in place to the north and west of Proserpine; from the south west of Eton and back around Marlborough extending through to south of Rockhampton.

Source: MRPMG, 2013. Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region. Queensland Government, 2004. Rubber Vine Management: control methods and case studies.

Image: S and A Pearson



Report Koala Sightings



On a recent Land for Wildlife revisit to the Walkerston property known as *Padaminka*, PCL project officers Laura Whitbread and Melissa Spalding had the pleasure of being introduced to two rescue koalas currently in rehabilitation at the wildlife refuge centre. Property owners Ian & Andrea Gottke are two of the most passionate people we have had the honour to meet, and they are heavily involved in Fauna Rescue Whitsundays (FRW), a not for profit volunteer organisation that cares for the regions wildlife and habitat. In conversation with the Gottkes, they spoke of the increasing number of koalas coming into their care. Little data is kept on koala movements, and to add to it, many of their rescues and sightings have been in high risk areas along the Peak Downs Highway. FRW is now focused on collecting more data on koala populations so colonies can be identified and mapped. Data collection includes sightings on wild populations as well as those in care (including sightings of deceased koalas). Ian and Andrea have rescued Koalas left for dead, as well as baby Koalas hiding near a deceased member on the road. They cannot emphasize enough that all sightings prove precious for rescue and for targeting future conservation efforts. *If you or anyone you know see a koala, ring the FRW hotline immediately.*

For any and all koala sightings, ring the FRW hotline on **4947 3389** or email direct at **frwsecretary@gmail.com.au**.

Plastic Free July Results *reported by Melissa Spalding*

Plastic Free July was an opportunity for me to think twice about my daily routine and the real impact that my every day life has on the environment. The month-long commitment to myself to pre-empt my coffee outings, grocery shopping and purchases by planning to bring reusable items or search for alternatives was, in the end, an extremely rewarding exercise. I kept track of all plastic items I used for the month and can report back the following:

Bushmans Bread plastic container, noodles takeaway container, Wokka Thin Egg noodle plastic wrap, deodorant stick, two coffee takeaway cups (so sad!), one plastic fork, one plastic plate, one straw, ear buds, one pair of disposable earplugs, and a stack of single day-use contacts.

The majority of the aforementioned items could have easily been avoided. Alternatives that I will need to research are ear buds that are not made of plastic, and food packaging alternatives (stores that you can purchase items that are not pre-packaged). Unfortunately I am stuck with the day-use contacts due to prescription/brand limitations.

Some important tips/hints I have picked up during the past month:

1. I bring my to-go coffee mug everywhere I go. When I get home in the evening, I wash it for reuse the following day. I cannot count the number of takeaway coffee cups I have avoided... too many!
2. I always brought reusable bags to the grocery store but have found that impromptu trips to town or to run errands were guaranteed to be sustainable when I kept my green bags in the car with me. Storage in the car means you can be on the go and never worry about them.
3. Avoiding packaged snacks (muesli bars, plastic takeaway beverages, fast food) was difficult in the beginning but proved easy as time went on. We baked, we had weekly meal plans to avoid takeaway, and I turned down many chances at soft drink purchases. I brought cutlery with me so I would not resort to plastic cutlery.
4. Compost bin and no more bin liners. The compost bin has significantly reduced our rubbish and as a result, reusing the same bin liner (and the move to newspaper bin liners) is now possible and easily sustained. Using brown paper bags for plastic doggie bags.
5. Avoiding cling wrap, and using plastic containers for ALL food storage.
6. Asking for no plastic when ordering food. I did not do this and ended up with some plastic items, mentioned above.

The biggest impact this exercise had on me is that it has opened my eyes to noticing the single-use plastics that friends and colleagues are using. Plastic straws, for example, are SO common yet they literally serve less than 10 minutes of purpose, and are being used by the millions and contributing to tonnes of plastic rubbish. The busy workers are relying on energy drinks and soft drinks for a pick-me-up, but that \$3 drink has the hidden cost of a plastic influx as well as yet another missed opportunity to stay hydrated and healthy with water. Recycling is so convenient these days, and yet many work places have yet to put in place recycling bins so that recycled items can be disposed of properly. We go to the shops to buy an item that is wrapped in so much plastic, and I ask myself now, "Do I really need this?" The use I get out of some plastic items (for example, party favours from the dollar shop) suddenly became so shallow that I spend less time entertaining the "Oh, I gotta have that" thought as I walked past the shops.

For anyone else who participated in Plastic Free July or for comments, contact Melissa.spalding@pioneercatchment.org.au. We would love to hear how you avoid single-use plastics.

Upcoming Events

August

Thursday 4 - Native Plants QLD-SGAP Mackay general meeting at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens from 7:30pm ph.4955 1745

Saturday 13 - Friends of MacKillop Working Bee ph.0419756357

Wednesday 17 - MRBG and native Plants QLD-SGAP Regional Forest Working Bee from 7:30am

Saturday 20 - BirdLife Mackay Monthly Count Programme at Shellgrit Creek at 9am ph.04883 15757

Saturday 27 - Friends of MacKillop Wetlands working bee; 8am to 10am

September

Saturday 3 - Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve working bee from 8am

Saturday 10 - Friends of MacKillop Wetlands working bee; 8am to 10am

Sunday 18 - Native Bee Workshop from 8:30am Ph. 4944 1979 to register

School Tree Day *continued...*



Junior Landcarers at Lagoons Creek National Tree Day site. It was a great opportunity for kids to spend a few hours getting their hands dirty, enjoying a sausage sizzle immediately after. The community turnout was wonderful, with all pre-dug holes filled by 11am.



Before and after photos at St Francis Xavier...

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