

2016 Soil Symposium

The **2016 Healthy Soils Symposium**, sponsored by Reef Catchments, was held at Walkerston on 7th December last year. Attendance was good given that the cane crush was still in progress.

Presenters (including Peter Muller from Soil and Land Surveys and Simon Mattsson from Central Queensland Soil Health Systems) challenged attendees to get to know their soils in order to protect and nurture them into the future.

PCL Chair, Dave Hunter, gave an excellent presentation on the National Biological Farming Conference held in Cairns earlier in the year.

The replenishment of the soil through the use of Mycorrhizal Fungi and other biological farming methods was the overarching theme of the conference with Ken Ede (Longmile Mangoes) and Natalie Fiocco (Farmacist) providing evidence of how these systems have given positive outcomes in the Mackay region.

This is a Symposium that is ideal for any landowner keen to move away from artificial fertilizer practices.

PCL Christmas Breakup

PCL staff and members had a wonderful time chatting and sharing at a lovely BBQ to bring 2016 to a close. PCL welcomed Tim Ey of Mackay Regional Council as a guest speaker. Thank you to Tim for updating PCL on council projects and involvement. A quick break for morning tea led to rounds of bocce, followed by a delicious BBQ lunch.



Tim Ey kicks off the Christmas Breakup party



The group discussing Candle Bush (Senna sp)

Peri urban Walk and Talk

On December 20th, Aaron Regan of Whitsunday Environmental Services led PCL members through paddocks at the Mackay campus of Riding for the Disabled for a weed identification session. Aaron fielded questions and the group spotted some of the more common "baddies" found in the region. Aaron also highlighted the importance of identifying weeds to enable appropriate control methods to be used which are rarely limited to chemical control. Understanding how weeds spread will help landowners make a decision on when, how and what to remove on their properties.

Membership Renewal

Membership renewals will be sent out to all members. Please return your membership renewal forms before April. If you have not received an email with renewal information please contact the office.

Membership is renewed every 12 months.



Plants for Landholders

A reminder that members can access up to 20 free native seedlings each year. Those eligible for plants under Land for Wildlife or Peri-urban programs should also contact the PCL office to make an appointment for plant collection. Plants are available through to April. Please bring your land management plans so suitable plants for your area are selected.

Beauty Leaf, Beach Calophyllum, Alexandrian Laurel

Family:

Clusiaceae

A large tree up to 35 metres, often found on beaches and rocky headlands along the coast. It is an attractive long-lived tree that can withstand heavy winds. It has an exude of sticky milk sap that becomes yellow on exposure. Seeds float and are commonly seen washed up on beaches. Leaves and fruit contain toxins.

Leaves: Simple, opposite, entire, elliptic or obovate, 80-200 x 45-115mm, leathery and glossy. Midrib pale, lateral veins fine; venation distinctive and beautiful on both live and dried leaves.

Flower: White or cream, borne in sprays; 6-petalled, petals 9-16mm long. Numerous yellow stamens about 210-360 per flower. Fragrant; summer to early winter.

Fruit: Globular, green to brown, one-seeded drupes, up to 30mm in diameter, suspended on a 60mm stalk. February to October.

Distribution: North east Queensland southwards to coastal central Queensland. Also NT and overseas. Altitudinal range at or close to sea level.

Source: Melzer, R and Plumb, J., 2007, Plants of Capricornia. Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants. http://keys.trin.org.au/key-server/data/0e0f0504-0103-430d-8004-060d07080d04/media/Html/taxon/Calophyllum_inophyllum.htm.

Image: W.T. Cooper, S & A Pearson



Weed Spotting

Solanum torvum

Devil's Fig

Family: Solanaceae

Spreading or scrambling shrub, 2-3m high, armed with scattered broad-based slightly hooked thorns, 3-8mm long; new growth with fawn star hairs.

Leaves: Alternate or paired, simple, broad-elliptic to ovate in outline, 55-220 x 45-180mm, margins with 2-4 triangular lobes on each side; dark green and rough textured above, paler beneath with thickly felted star hairs; scattered thorns on both surfaces.

Flower: White, star-shaped with central cone of yellow stamens, 20-25mm diameter; borne on many-flowered axillary racemes or sprays.

Fruit: Globular berries, 12-17mm in diameter, dull yellow or brownish when ripe with many egg-shaped cream or brown seeds about 2mm long. Spread by birds.

Distribution: Widespread throughout the region. Invades rainforests, coastal communities, creek banks and disturbed areas.

Source: MRPMG, 2013. Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region

Images: Photo: Sheldon Navie at https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Htm/solanum_chrysotrichum.htm & S & A Pearson





Pasture a "blank canvas" for future revegetation of natives

Project Update on Far Beach

On January 17th, Jonathon Dykyj from Mackay Regional Council began a morning activity with weed identification and control options for target weeds including: Mossman burr (*Cenchrus echinatus*), Guinea Grass (*Megathyrsus maximus* var *maximus*), and Lantana (*Lantana camara*). Volunteers commenced weeding, and a photo point for site monitoring was set up on the southern end of the 2.95ha site. Funding received from Reef Catchments will expand on weed control and revegetation works to date, and includes funding for another 100 coastal tiles to be planted across the site.

As opposed to individual tube stock, natives are grown in square tiles with up to five species in each tile.



Nature Refuge in the Making

New members of the Land for Wildlife family are Theresa and Jason who will be working towards Land for Wildlife accreditation as they revegetate their block in Kuttabul. Their property is in close proximity to many valuable habitats including Mount Martin and Mount Ossa National Parks and Mount Roy. The location of their property is important as reinstated native vegetation will help create a wildlife corridor connecting these surrounds.

Their regional ecosystem includes eucalypt woodland to open forest, including *Eucalypt tereticornis* (Old Blue Gum), *Eucalyptus platyphylla* (Poplar Gum) and *Corymbia tessellaris* (Moreton Bay Ash). Theresa and Jason have a keen interest in growing Koala feed trees, and have recently planted more Blue Gums to attract Koalas back into their property.



Why Land for Wildlife?

- National Parks and nature reserves are not the only areas that house valuable habitats. Landowners with bushland on their property play an important role in nature conservation as often private land adjoins larger habitat areas. Seeing your property as part of the bigger picture is the first step in understanding the importance of your block of land (no matter how big or small!).
- When you join Land for Wildlife, landholders are offered advice and assistance tailored to their property goals. For example, assistance with weed identification and control, habitat regeneration, revegetation or bushland management.
- Get to know your native plants and animals, your catchment and catchment neighbours by joining the program. You will have access to excellent field guides and other references, including free workshops, field days and quarterly newsletters.

Did you Know?

- The program is free to join and will not alter the legal status of the property nor does it convey the right of public access.
- Landowners who are looking for ways to integrate nature conservation with other land uses (agriculture, grazing or tourism) are encouraged to participate.
- Natural ecosystems can offer economic benefits such as reduced soil erosion, improved soil structure, improved water quality, shade, shelter, pollination and fertilisation to ensure healthy and productive land.

Expressions of Interest are now being received for the program. If you or someone you know might be interested in learning more, contact project officer Melissa Spalding at 4944 1979 or at Melissa.spalding@pioneercatchment.org.au.

Upcoming Events

February

Saturday 4 - Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve working bee from 8am ph. 0447 215 359

Sunday 5 - Birdlife Mackay outing. Meet at service station Coningsby 0600 ph. 4959 3382

Sunday 19 - CQSHS Field Day at Michael & John Attard's Farm, 223 North Eton Rd, Eton from 3:30pm RSVP to Mattsson@mcs.net.au

Wednesday 22 - Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve group meeting at Kupke Residence ph. 0447 215 359

March

Wednesday 1 - Reef Catchments Grazing Forum

Thursday 2 - Native Plants QLD-SGAP general meeting, MRBG meeting room from 7:30pm ph. 4955 1745

Sunday 5 - Birdlife Mackay outing meeting at Tourist Info Centre at 0600 ph. 4959 3382

Tuesday 21 - International Day of Forests (<http://www.un.org/en/events/forestsday/>)

Wednesday 22 - Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve group meeting at Kupke residence ph. 0447 215 359

Saturday 25 - Earth Hour - switch off your lights from 8:30-9:30pm. (<http://www.earthhour.org.au/home/>)

Fourth Annual Soil Health Field Day

Thursday, April 6th & April 7th



Community and industry members interested in soil health are invited to save the date for this anticipated event. An event flyer with detailed information will be distributed closer to the date.

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. Management Committee

Chair Dave Hunter	Committee
Members:	
Vice-Chair Dianne Williams	Laura Whitbread
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	Grant Howard
	Irene Champion

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