



Introducing the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI)

The Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) is a carbon offsets scheme being established by the Australian Government to provide new economic opportunities for farmers, forest growers and landholders and help the environment by reducing carbon pollution.

The legislation underlying the CFI was introduced to Parliament in March 2011. Details of the 'explanatory memorandum' and consultation paper can be found on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) website: www.daff.gov.au/

Offset projects established under the CFI will need to apply methodologies approved by the Government. Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Minister, Greg Combet, says people can now submit methodologies to the Domestic Offsets Integrity Committee to be assessed for use under the CFI. The committee will assess the technical merit of offset methodologies and ensure that CFI projects result in real abatement.

Mr Combet says methodologies developed by so-called early movers can be considered, and any remaining technical issues resolved, in advance of the legislation providing for the CFI.

Mr Combet says people will then be able to get started with their project planning and realise early investment opportunities.

Interim guidelines for submitting methodologies are now available on the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency website. The guidelines have been developed following public consultation on the proposed CFI design.

The guidelines have been prepared to allow early assessment of CFI methodologies which will fast-track offset projects when the scheme starts.

Article adapted from *EnviroInfo Premium*.



PCL— come and find us at...

- **Marian market, Catholic Church Grounds, Sunday 17th April from 8am**

Come along to the Marian Markets for information on current projects, land management initiatives and other various community activities.

- **Weed ID Day at Eton Sports Ground (opposite the Eton Hotel), Monday 18th April 8.30—11am**

This event will again be attended by Mackay Regional Council and Biosecurity Queensland officers, with the latest advice and information about agricultural and environmental threatening plants. Everybody who brings in a weed can swap them for two free native plants.

The event is supported by the Mackay Regional Council through its Natural Environment Levy. Please bring all weeds in a bag to avoid any potential spread of seed.



Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association Blue-green Algae project.

Friday 15th April 10:30am-12:30pm, Middle Creek Dam.

A FREE community information session where SLCMA will talk about the project, results so far and how the information gained can be applied. There will also be guest speakers from Central Queensland University talking about Blue-green Algae and the importance of monitoring. RSVP by 13th April to SLCMA office on 4956 1388.

Congratulations St. Pats!

A windy and showery Sunday on March 6th did not put off a dedicated team of St. Patrick's College students braving the elements for the 21st annual Clean Up Australia Day. Twenty eight volunteers, including a few members from the public, turned up to lend a hand in what turned out to be a very successful day for environmental awareness.

The 2 hour event saw a range of rubbish pulled from the vegetation including tyres, TV's, air conditioning units, and a personal gym! Overall, roughly 300kgs of rubbish was removed from the site which included 22 bags of collected rubbish and 11 bags of recycling from an area over the size of two football fields!

Over half a million people participated in Clean Up Australia Day nationwide. The event was supported by Mackay Regional Council and PCL extends their congratulations to all who were involved.



Images: D.Milburn

Plant of the Month

Kangaroo Grass / *Themeda triandra*

Kangaroo grass is one of Australia's most widespread native grasses, due to its resilience and adaptability to Australia's harsh environmental conditions. Its attractive tufty appearance and low maintenance requirements have seen this grass become a feature of many modern landscaped gardens. Kangaroo grass is often confused with barbed-wire grass (*Cymbopogon refractus*) or the introduced grader grass (*Themeda quadrivalvis*). It is an important food source for a range of butterfly larvae, grazing feeders like the grey kangaroo, and birds like native finches who thrive off the seed.

Form: Kangaroo grass grows to an average of 1m in height, the individual leaves grow to 50cm, and between 2 and 5mm wide. These leaves have an acutely pointed tip and turn to a rusty brown colour when mature. The similar barbed-wire grass has leaves that produce a spicy citrus odour when crushed, helping to distinguish the difference.

Seed-head: The seed head is relatively large and often reddish in colour, with a drooping appearance. These heads are clustered in appearance along the spike and become papery when old.

Propagation: Grow from seed, plant through summer to early autumn. Harvest seed for the following year from early December and dry at a low temperature if possible.

Local Habitat: Widespread habitat from dry eucalypt forest and hillsides, to Melaleuca woodlands to sand plains.

Distribution: Can be found along the entire eastern districts of Queensland, down to Tasmania and sporadic areas throughout central and west Australia. Despite its extensive coverage, its range has been reduced in the Mackay region through alternative land use and the prevention of fire which allows many exotic grasses to proliferate. Kangaroo grass can be found locally in the Slade Point Reserve. Source: *Department of Primary Industries, NSW*.



Image: Swan Bay Environment Association Inc.



Image: Eurobodalla Shire Council

Weed of the Month

Grader Grass / *Themeda quadrivalvis*

A larger and more dominant form of its native cousin (above), grader grass is an opportunistic coloniser of areas of disturbed land, including those areas affected by earthworks and graders, from which its common name arises. This native from India was first recorded in Australia in 1935 in Habana, and thought to have been introduced in contaminated straw packaging. Today it spans across the entire northern tropics to western Australia.

Description: Grader grass grows to be taller than *T. triandra*, up to 2m, and exhibits a more robust appearance with a dense, heavier looking inflorescence, and cane like stems. Leaves are to a length of 60cm. The spikelets (see image below right) of grader grass tend to be half that of kangaroo grass and seed heads give off more of a golden colour when mature compared to the dull brown of the native variety.

The Problem: Grader grass forms dense swards and releases a large viable seed bank upon maturity. These seeds are fire tolerant in the ground and germinate rapidly, meaning it will out compete other species and can successfully colonise large areas of disturbance. It is capable of invading both native and improved pastures and, due to its low palatability, can greatly reduce animal productivity.

Control: Prevention is the best method by minimising disturbance events and promoting healthy soils. Grader grass is an annual so all attempts should be made to treat the grass (slashing or herbicide) before seed development. Be aware that repeated treatment will be necessary for at least one season to account for the seed bank in the soil.



Image: DPI

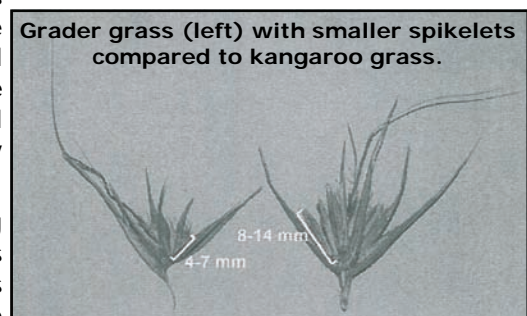


Image: Tropical Grasslands

Instant biodiversity—Just add grass!

Recently PCL has been undertaking a survey of Land for Wildlife members and also visiting properties around the region. This has enabled us to talk to landholders about what is the most rewarding aspect of being a Land for Wildlife member. Without a doubt, the aspect landholders find most rewarding is observing wildlife within an area they have been working on.

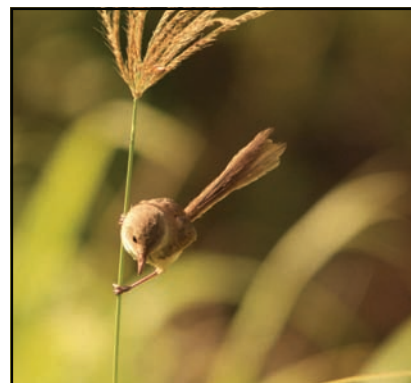
Planting locally native grass species can be a rewarding way to encourage biodiversity to your property. There are additional environmental benefits provided by planting native grasses, including:

- Carbon storage: Research suggests that grasses can store significant amounts of soil carbon, admittedly, the amount is less than that of woody ecosystems.
- Soil erosion control: Deep-rooted perennial native grasses can withstand drought conditions and, can improve water infiltration into the soils which, in turn reduces run-off. Longer-lived native grasses are particularly useful for soil stability on hillsides.
- Weed control: Grasses can aid in weed control as they can shade out an area underneath. For example, some native grasses have been shown to exclude the weed Serrated Tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*; a Weed of National Significance found in South-eastern Australia).

The planting of grass species not only increases floral species diversity but also increases structural diversity which will encourage biodiversity. The increase in cover will encourage insects and reptiles such as lizards and skinks (and yes, some snake species too). In turn, the presence of these species will encourage the small mammals who feed on them, such as Dunnart's and Bandicoots, native mice species and Melomys. Agile Wallabies can also be commonly seen in grassland areas. Grasses also attract a diversity of bird species, particularly when connected to other habitat types such as woodlands or open forests as many animals need these areas for shelter and breeding.

Bird watching can be a rewarding activity and birds are useful species to monitor as they can be relatively easy to observe and identify. Different species and abundances can also indicate the health of an ecosystem. Within grassed areas, some bird species to keep an eye out for on your property include: Red-backed Fairy-wren, Bush Stone-curlew, Golden-headed Cisticola, Rainbow Bee-eater, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Red-browed and Crimson Finch. Why not start a list of species found on your property today? For more information about becoming a Land for Wildlife participant, please call the PCL office.

Source: *Natural Resource Advisory Council, NSW.*



A female Red-backed Fairy-wren. Image H Glover

Lantana sprouts a new threat

A species of Lantana never before found in Australia has been reported in the Coominya area, west of Brisbane, and residents are asked to look out for further infestations of the plant. National Lantana coordinator Kym Johnson said the common form of lantana was one of Australia's most serious weeds and cost the grazing industry more than \$121 million in lost production each year.

"While only one plant of the new species has so far been found and it has been eradicated, it's important to ensure there aren't more growing in the area and potentially creating a new weed threat.

"There are a range of ornamental hybrid varieties brought to Australia as garden plants and many of these were bred to have greater frost and/or drought tolerances as well as produce larger numbers of flowers. If these traits are transferred to the weedy forms through cross fertilisation, or if we begin to see new varieties self seeding and naturalising, then lantana could become even more difficult to manage.

"It is possible this new species found is a throw-back to one of the original species, used to create an ornamental variety, and while it could be a one-off, we need to be certain there isn't a larger source population somewhere".

"The Queensland Herbarium has confirmed this species of lantana has never been identified in Australia before, but so far has been unable to identify it to species level. There are more than 150 lantana species found world-wide and it's possible the specimen will be sent to overseas experts to try and identify it further."

The new lantana species is quite small, at approximately 15 cm in height, has small clusters of yellow flowers with orange throats and elongate, leathery leaves. The plant has pairs of oppositely positioned leaves. The typical broad leaf shape and serrated leaf margins of common lantana varieties are not present. If any plants matching the above description are found, please contact Ms Johnson on LantanaWoNS@deedi.qld.gov.au or call 13 25 23. For more information, visit the Weeds Australia website at www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/lantana. Source: *Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation.*



Image: DEEDI

Who's who in Pioneer Catchment & Landcare?

Management Committee

Chair Margaret Lane (Society for Growing Australian Plants—MackayBranch)

Deputy Chair Dave Hunter

Treasurer Wendy Eiteneuer

Secretary (Non voting) Hayley Glover

Committee Members

Cr. Wendy Cameron (Mackay Regional Council)

Irene Champion

Joan Fitzsimmons (Mackay Conservation Group)

Bruce Milles

Dianne Williams (Australian Forest Growers)

Cr. Ross Walker (Mackay Regional Council)

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Newsletter Hayley Glover, Dallas Milburn

Upcoming Events

April

Thursday 7, from 8pm—SGAP Monthly Meeting. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court. Visitors welcome.

Saturday 9, 8am (rescheduled)— Working Bee at Morag McNichol Reserve. Contact Jim McNichol on 4942 8802 for details.

Sunday 17, 8am—12pm—Marian Markets, Catholic Church Grounds, Anzac avenue, Marian.

Monday 18, 8.30—11am—Weed ID day at Eton sports grounds, opposite Eton Hotel. Contact PCL for further information.

Friday 29th April—Monday 2nd May—14th Annual Wintermoon Festival, Cameron's Pocket. For more information visit www.wintermoonfestival.com

May

Sunday 1, 6:30am— MACBOCA trip to Mt. Ossa and surrounds. Meeting at Mobil Service Station, Coningsby. Contact 4952 2964 or 4954 0937 for details.

Thursday 5, from 8pm—SGAP Monthly Meeting. Guest presentation "Island Taskforce Project" by Derek Ball, Reef Catchments. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court. Visitors welcome.

Saturday 7, 8am— Working Bee at Morag McNichol Reserve. Contact Jim McNichol on 4942 8802 for details.

Sunday 15, 8am—1pm—Palm & Cycad Fete with SGAP Plant Sale. Farleigh Mill Palm Gardens.

Thursday 19 & Friday 20—BSES Field Days.

Supported by:



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OUR
COUNTRY

FREE DIY Carbon Warrior Kits

These kits are available to borrow free of charge from Mackay Regional Council Libraries. The kits assist the user with practical tips and tools to help you switch on your energy sense at home.

Each kit includes a power meter to measure the electricity consumption and costs of appliances such as fridges, heating and cooling appliances. The kits also include infrared thermometer, a stopwatch and instructions. These kits could help to save hundreds of dollars each year and reduce your carbon footprint. For more information:

www.mackay.qld.gov.au/libraries



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