



Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

February 2011

Welcome to 2011

by Margaret Lane, PCL Chair

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group's relationship with Mackay Regional Council has taken a new turn this year with significant financial support to deliver a range of services. For many years PCL has worked with our local government on a range of projects while receiving in-kind support. Now, with funds from the Natural Environment Levy, PCL is delivering Land for Wildlife in our catchments and enabling us to continue working with local schools, producing our monthly newsletter, presenting displays at local events and providing workshops and field trips.

Funding for these activities enabled us to employ Dallas, our new Project Officer who is now out and about in the catchment talking to landholders about Land for Wildlife, pest management and general natural resource management issues.

Our officers have been successful in raising funds for specific projects and are currently working on projects to deliver workshops and field days throughout the region, working in Slade Point Reserve and monitoring fish kills in Reliance and Fursden creeks, all funded by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country. Hail Creek Mine Community Development Fund has recently approved a project for community education and monitoring of shorebirds (see below for details on how you can be involved).

The new year has also brought a new member to our Management Committee, Cr Ross Walker. We look forward to working with Ross and the community to deliver these projects.

Pond Apple Field Day— 13th February 2011

Meeting at the corner of Mackay-Habana Rd and Gardiners Rd, Habana, 10am to 2 pm.

Three isolated infestations of pond have been found in Mackay over the last few years. The current infestation of Pond Apple is growing in a creek line at Habana.

Trees from the invasive plant have been found in the mangrove estuary of Reliance Creek, well downstream from the original infestation. The life of the seed in sea water (>3 years) combined with modelling of ocean currents increases the potential for seeds to colonise up to 100km north and 150 km south of the original infestation.



Fruit of a Pond Apple tree.
Image H.Glover

In response, Reef Catchments and the Mackay Regional Pest Management Group (MRPMG) has successfully obtained funding through the Federal Governments Caring for our Country program to control this pond apple infestation. It is important that all infestations are isolated and trees of this species are identified and controlled. So for this purpose, Mackay Regional Council and DEEDI (Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation), on behalf of the MRPMG are holding a Field Day for the identification and control of Pond Apple. Attendees will be shown Pond Apple Trees in fruit before these trees are removed.

Everyone is welcome to attend this field day, to learn identification and control techniques for yourself. For more information, please contact PCL on 4944 1979.

Weed ID Day

Found a new weed from this wet weather? Bring it along to **Melba House, Marian on Monday 21st February from 9am to 11am** for identification and control advice by Biosecurity Queensland officers. You can take home 2 free natives and help to keep the Pioneer Valley naturally native.

Did you know that over 21,000 migratory shorebirds visit the Mackay region each year?



Shorebird ID Sessions

12th Feb: 4-6pm Sandfly Creek with Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA). Meet at Reserve entrance at the end of River St.

26th Feb: 5-6pm Blacks Beach with Mackay & District Turtle Watch. Meet at Anglers Parade car park.

19th March: 10-11am Finlayson's Point, Seaforth

20th March: 10am-12pm Sandfly Creek with CVA. Reserve entrance at the end of River St.

DATE CLAIMER: 12th March— FREE shorebird workshop with Queensland Wader Study Group covering topics including identification techniques, migration ecology and current threats facing shorebirds worldwide. Followed by a field trip to a local roost site. Contact PCL to register.

Plant of the Month

Native Gardenia / *Atractocarpus fitzalanii*

Also known as Brown Gardenia, this member of the Rubiaceae family is becoming a sought after plant for backyards with its beautifully scented flowers and lush growth. Although capable of growing to 8 meters, this plant is an excellent specimen for indoor or outdoor containers. Flowers open in the afternoon and attract day moths for fertilisation.

Leaves: The bright lime coloured leaves are simple, opposite, glossy to 25cm in length; with distinctive sunken side-veins.

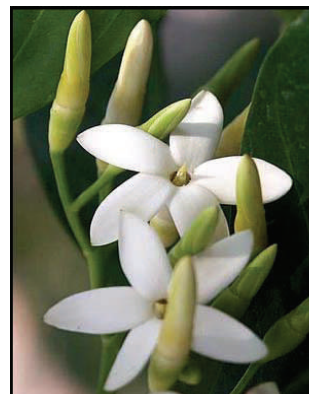
Flowers: Fragrant white tubular flowers appear from September to May, containing five prominent petals with an overall diameter of roughly 3cm. The fruit, about 4–8cm in diameter, matures between April to June and can be eaten fresh. The whitish small seeds are flat and triangular, and surrounded by a soft pulp.

Propagation: Seeds can be removed from fruit and sown immediately. The plant needs adequate moisture and should be placed in a partly shaded area.

Local Habitat: Native Gardenia naturally occurs in riparian rainforests.

Distribution: It is found from Cooktown to Queensland's Central Coast.

Source: *SGAP (1985, Set 8 No.5)*.



Source: Garden Boutique

Weed of the Month

Madeira Vine/ *Anredera cordifolia*

Madeira Vine was introduced from South America because of its pretty white flowers which resemble a lambs tail, this in turn being another common name for the plant. It was often planted next to outdoor latrines in Australia as the leaves, when eaten, were believed to have a laxative effect. Today, Madeira Vine poses a significant threat to our rainforest and riparian zones due to its durability and explosive growth patterns.

Description: Leaves are shiny and succulent, rounded to heart shaped, and up to 10cm long. They are lighter on the underside. Masses of white fragrant 'lambs tail' like flowers are borne between March and May. Numerous potato like tubers will form along the stem as well as underground, and these can grow to 15cm in diameter (left, below).



A large Madeira tuber.
Image: Brisbane City Council.

The Problem: Madeira is a persistent, prolific, and destructive vine. It's stems can grow to 20 meters in length, at a rate of 1 meter per day in rich moist soils. It can grow in most soil types and is an efficient coloniser of disturbed areas. The vine is capable of quickly smothering and destroying small trees, and de-limbing larger ones through the sheer weight of fleshy leaves and masses of aerial tubers. These tubers are spread by water, rodents, improper dumping of garden waste and soil movement. Only the slightest fragment of a tuber is needed for the plant to

shoot and quickly develop, and these tubers will remain viable for up to 5 years. Madeira is also capable of re-shooting from the stem or the leaf.

Control: Large stems should be cut and soaked in a neat solution of glyphosate to help get the poison into the tubers along the stem. However the most effective method is complete hand removal of all parts of the plant in thick refuse bags. The area will need to be closely monitored for up to 5 years. For more information on control contact PCL.

Source: *Wilson's Creek Landcare*.



Image: Pittwater Council

Madeira Vine in the Pioneer Valley

Madeira has re-surfaced along Cattle Creek by the Gargett Bridge, and Mackay Regional Council is coordinating with PCL to address this threat. The vine is a **declared class 3** pest and should be removed from sensitive areas. It could develop into a wide spread problem if it is able to spread down the Pioneer Valley and landholders along this area are asked to keep an eye out.

Congratulations!

PCL and Mackay Regional Council (MRC) would like to congratulate Bob and Eileen Dunkley for becoming this program's first fully registered Land for Wildlife property. Bob and Eileen have been working tirelessly in recent years to rehabilitate their Dumbleton property into an environment that encourages and supports native animals, as well as become an important seed bank for species of local provenance. The MRC funded program encourages landholders with areas of native bush to join the program and help to sustain our wildlife through the most natural means possible. Anyone wishing to become apart of the program can phone PCL for details.



Image: D. Milburn

Getting the Most Out of Your Dam

by Margaret Meng, SLCMA Project Officer

With recent heavy rains across our region, many farm dams are full and overflowing. Dams are built for a variety of purposes such as irrigation, stock watering points or emergency water supplies, however their 'role' within a catchment is often not considered. By including native water plants and riparian vegetation, these areas have the potential to provide essential habitat for local wildlife as well as help maintain good water quality.

Wildlife present in the dam will be strongly influenced by the closeness of other water sources and habitat. If you intend on stocking the dam with fish there are basic guidelines which should be followed, the Department of Employment, Economic, Development and Innovation (DEEDI) publishes a fact sheet *Stocking Private Dams* which can be found at http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/28_15761.htm.

The following guidelines are suggested along with a list of suggested native fish species:

- Research and utilise native fish species which occur naturally in local creeks and downstream rivers.
- Remember that introduced fish species have a high chance of escaping into local waterways during a high rainfall event.
- Ensure that the selected fish have access to suitable natural food sources.

Vegetation planted around the edge of dams can offer shade for cattle and filter sediment from runoff. By holding sediment, reducing nutrient levels from entering the dam and taking up extra nutrients, well established native vegetation can reduce erosion and algae outbreaks. Soil salinity can also be reduced with deep rooted native vegetation keeping underground water from rising to the surface bringing up dissolved salts. Avoid planting large trees with invasive roots and excessive water requirements on dam edges or dam walls as they can reduce dam water levels and weaken dam walls.

Utilising and encouraging local native vegetation on and around dams not only reduces farm costs by reducing erosion and dam maintenance, but increases local wildlife and the aesthetic value of the property.

Source: "Dam Wildlife", *Land for Wildlife Queensland Newsletter*, Spring 2007, p. 8; "Making your dam wildlife friendly", *land for Wildlife note no.2*, April 1999.

Myrtle Rust found in Queensland

Following the discovery of Myrtle Rust in Queensland, biosecurity officers are now asking people to keep a close eye out for this potentially devastating disease. It was first discovered in Australia in April 2010 in NSW, and the disease appears to be quickly spreading after being found in numerous Brisbane nurseries, although its overall range is currently unknown.

Myrtle rust (*Uredo rangelii*) is a fungus that affects only plants from the Myrtaceae family. The rust attacks young actively growing leaves and shoot tips and stems, as well as the fruit and sepals of susceptible plants. Early signs of infection included raised spots or pustules, which after a few days, turn a distinctive egg-yolk yellow. The result is a tree with seriously deformed leaves and this can lead to defoliation, dieback, stunted growth and even death of the tree. The disease is spread by wind borne spores, or by hitching a ride on contaminated matter like birds, bees, or nursery materials. Anyone who suspects they know of any infected trees is urged to contact DEEDI.

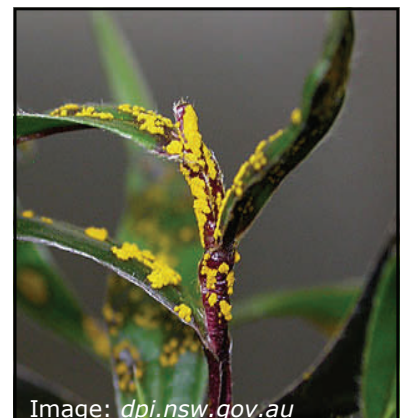


Image: dpi.nsw.gov.au

Source: www.dpi.qld.gov.au

Who's who in Pioneer Catchment & Landcare?

Management Committee

Chair Margaret Lane (Society for Growing Australian Plants—Mackay Branch)

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)

Cr. Karen May (Mackay Regional Council)

Bruce Milles

Dianne Williams (Central Queensland Forestry Association)

Cr. Ross Walker (Mackay Regional Council)

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Project Officer Dallas Milburn

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Newsletter Hayley Glover, Dallas Milburn

Supported by:



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

Upcoming Events February

Saturday 12th 4-6pm—Join Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) and PCL to identify shorebirds of Sandfly Creek, lots of activities for kids. Meeting Reserve entrance at the end of River St. Contact CVA for more information on 4951 0933.

Sunday 13th, 10am—2pm—Pond Apple Field Day. Learn about and pull some fruit off this invasive weed. Meet at corner of Mackay-Habana Rd and Gardiners Rd, Habana.

Tuesday 15th—Saturday 19th—Join CVA with planting, weeding and maintenance activities in Sandfly Creek Environmental Reserve. Contact CVA for more information.

Monday 21st, 9-11am—Weed ID day at Melba House, Marian. Contact PCL for further information.

Saturday 26th, 8-10am—Weed control activities at Bucasia. Meet at the beach access north of swimming enclosure. Accessed via track from northern end of Waverley Street, Bucasia.

Saturday 26th 3-6pm—Join PCL in planting and weed control, and learn about turtles and shorebirds at Blacks Beach. Lots of activities for kids. Contact PCL for details.

March

Thursday 3, from 8pm—SGAP Monthly Meeting. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court. Visitors welcome.

Saturday 5, 8am—Working Bee at Morag McNichol Reserve. Contact Jim McNichol on 4942 8802 for details.

Sunday 6, 05.45am—MACBOCA trip to Cape Hillsborough, Howells Rd, Seaforth, meeting at the Mobile Service Station, Coningsby. Contact 4952 2964 or 0403 172 455 for details.

Saturday 12th—Shorebird Workshop with Queensland Wader Study Group.

Saturday 19th, 8-11am—Weed control activities at Finlayson's Point, Seaforth and learn about shorebirds that use this region. Meeting at turn-around circle, contact PCL for details.



**Sunday 6 March
2011 — Riverside
Drive**

**Join Pioneer Catchment and Landcare Group on Clean up
Australia Day 8-10am**

Bring sun protection and closed-in, sturdy footwear. Gloves provided. Contact PCL for details.



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