



Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

July 2011

Is your school or youth group doing their bit for the environment?



Image: Landcare Queensland

Image: Education Queensland

Nude Foods, Revegetation Plot, Saving Water?

If so, we want to hear about it. Landcare Day in the Gardens is being held on Sunday 11th Sept 9-2pm at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens and we want to promote YOUR school or group to the community.

The theme for this year's event "**Kids make a difference... in your backyard**" will showcase initiatives that local schools, classes or youth groups are undertaking to make their school or group more sustainable.

Whether reducing your waste, introducing energy saving initiatives or increasing environmental curriculum, whether you are just starting out or up to the 10th year of a sustainability program, why not take the opportunity to boast about what your school or group is achieving.

Schools or groups can showcase their initiatives, programs or achievement with either displays or a poster at the event—contact Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group to discuss on 4944 1979.

Healthy Soils Workshop

Sunday 7th August 8am—5:30pm

Based on the highly regarded Grazing for Profit School, the RCS Healthy Soils Workshop will empower participants to increase the overall health, productivity and value of their land.

- ✓ Understanding the linkages between healthy soils, healthy animals, healthy people and healthy profit
- ✓ Understanding how, as land managers, we influence those linkages
- ✓ Motivation and discussion of cutting edge topics
- ✓ Practical tools and tips to take home and implement

Cost: \$30 per person (includes resource material, smoko & lunch)

RSVP: Participants must register with PCL to secure their place on 4944 1979 or d.milburn@pioneercatchment.org.au

Other workshops will be held:

- Saturday 6 August, Sarina. Phone *Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Assn* on 4956 1388.
- Monday 8 August, Whitsunday. Phone *Whitsunday Catchment Landcare* on 4945 0267.

Community Action Grants— CLOSE 1st August

\$5 million has been allocated to the Community Action Grants (CAG) to support conservation of the Australian landscape and help rural, urban and indigenous community groups across the country protect the environment and adopt sustainable land management practices.

Community Action Grants are for between \$5000—\$20,000 (EX GST). Individuals are not eligible for CAGs and projects must be completed within 18 months. Importantly, the CAGs can be used for on ground works or capacity building within the community.

Small groups which are not incorporated can participate by being sponsored by an incorporated organisation that is willing to apply on their behalf. For more information on current CAG or on how to apply for the current round of funding go to www.nrm.gov.au or contact the Regional Landcare Facilitator Hayley Glover on 4944 1979 or hayley.glover@reefcatchments.com.au



**Friday 8th July
9:30am—2pm**

**Mackay Botanic
Gardens Meeting
Room— 9 Lagoon
St, West Mackay.**

Presenters:

Kathy Stephens, Weed Spotters Queensland Network Coordinator, Principal Botanist at Queensland Herbarium.

Phillip Moran, Deputy Chair of the National Aquatic Weeds Management Group, NRM manager Noosa Landcare, researcher on Cabomba control.

- Early weed detection
- Aquatic weed identification
- Morning tea and lunch provided

Bring an aquatic weed for identification

RSVP for catering to Dale Arvidsson at 4952 7300.

Plant of the Month

Yellow Wood *Acronychia laevis*

Yellow Wood is a large shrub to small tree, with compact growth and striking fruit that range from pink to purple in colouration. Whilst edible, the fruit is generally not pleasant to eat. The Latin name is derived from the Greek language with *Acronychia* translating to claw edged, in reference to the petal points, and *laevis* meaning smooth, referring to its smooth shoots and leaves.

Leaves: Opposite, elliptic to obovate, up to 9x4cm in size. The apex is rounded or slightly indented and there is a distinct joint where the leaf blade meets the stem. They contain numerous oil dots and emit a citrus smell when crushed.

Flowers/Fruit: Small greenish white flowers with four recurved petals are followed by colourful four cornered, crisp-fleshy fruits, to about 1.5cm in diameter, that contain up to 4 dark seeds about 4mm long. Flowering and fruiting extends over a long period.

Propagation: Seed can be difficult to germinate; soak fresh seeds for several days to improve chances. The preferred method is growing from cuttings.

Habitat: Rainforest communities including endangered *beach scrub*. It prefers well composted soil and some shade however, it will grow in full sun and once established, can survive on rainfall alone.

Distribution: North East Qld to North East NSW. Also found on Lord Howe Island and New Caledonia. Common around Mackay.

Slade Point Reserve: The conditions within the sheltered areas of the reserve provide adequate shade and good fertile soils for this plant to flourish. It will be a featured plant during the information walk on July 15th (see opposite).

Source: Don Perrin (1988), *Dictionary of Botanical names*. Champion, I. and Alcock, H. (1989) *One Hundred and One Trees of Mackay*, The Mackay Branch of Society for Growing Australian Plants. Meltzer & Plumb (2007), *Plants of Capricornia*.



Acronychia laevis
Image: D Milburn

Weed of the Month

Red-leaved Alternanthera *Alternanthera brasiliana* 'Rubiginosa'

Red-leaved Alternanthera is a perennial weed from sub tropical America that was introduced as an ornamental garden plant and cultivated for its durability and colourful leaves. It has subsequently escaped, often through inappropriate dumping of garden waste.

Description: A herbaceous many-stemmed plant to 1.5m or more. It has opposite, narrowly-ovate dark green to purple leaves that taper into the apex. Leaves turn ruby red to purplish with the more sunlight they receive. Small papery white to cream flowers are produced in many-flowered axillary or terminal 'heads'. Each flower produces one tiny dry seed that is long lived.

The problem: The plant is hardy and well adapted to spreading. It reproduces vegetatively and via seeds that can remain in the soil for extended periods. The brittle stems readily snap off and can form new plants by rooting from the nodes. It threatens environmentally sensitive areas with well drained but moist soils, creek lines, open forests and disturbed areas. It is capable of quickly forming dense populations that dominate the ground layer, prevent the recruitment of native species and thus reduce species diversity.

Dealing with the problem: Manual control of this plant is the best approach for small manageable infestations but will need to be ongoing, possibly for many seasons. Remove as much of the plant as possible and store in black plastic bags to rot. This can take more than a month. Help spread the word to family, neighbours and friends, as this is a plant still found in many gardens, and incorrect dumping often leads to new outbreaks. Herbicide control options are available. Please contact PCL for more information.

Slade Pt Reserve: Infestations are again spreading on the western side of the reserve, particularly around the Teal St entrance track.

Source: *Are Your Garden Plants Going Bush*, Burkesbackyard.com.au



Image: P Alden

Project Update—Slade Point Reserve



Over the last few months a number of activities and events have been held in Slade Point Reserve aimed at preserving the natural values and raising awareness to the next generation of environmentalists. The arrival of good weather has finally seen the water levels in the wetlands reduced to open up all walking tracks around the reserve.

Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) rolled up their sleeves over five days to help clean up and control various weeds, particularly along the coastal track. They painstakingly removed patches of Seaforth Burr as well as vines and woody weeds, including one large patch of Lantana. They also pitched in to bag and remove patches of the Red-leaved Alternanthera (see weed of the month) which is spreading along the Teal St entrance.

Year 3 students from St Francis Xavier School took a field trip to the reserve and looked at the biodiversity values as well as the threats from weed invasion and urbanisation. They completed the walk by each planting a native tree in what turned out to be a great day for all.

Wetland information walk in July with Irene Champion once again kindly giving her time and knowledge for the walk. The focus will be the wetlands, with an in-depth look into specific weeds that are impacting regional wetlands, as well as typical native species that colonise these important areas. The 1.5 hour walk will be an ideal time for community members to ask questions and learn more about the wetlands. **Join us: Friday 15th July at 8AM at the Slade Pt Reserve, Teal St entrance.** Bring water, sturdy footwear, insect repellent, cameras, ID books, and a chair to enjoy a light morning tea at the conclusion of the walk.

PCL's Slade Point Project is wrapping up and a good time to reflect on the achievements and the benefits this will bring to the reserve:

- 5 working bees held in the Reserve with local community members;
- Over 170 school children visited and learned about the Reserve through this project and,
- Over 250 hours of weed control work undertaken by a CVA team and weed contractor

This project is supported by PCL, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.



Volunteers over a pile of felled woody weeds.



A young tree planted by St Francis Xavier Primary students. Images: D Milburn

Coastal Communities Update

The coasts and communities project was initiated to set a vision for the future of the Mackay coast and engage local communities in coastal management activities. The project provides a strategic and coordinated approach to managing our coast; developing local management plans to enable all organisations, community groups, and local residents to work together to better use and attract resources, and achieve the best outcome for our coastal environments.

Nine beach management plans have now been developed in consultation with coastal communities for public coastal land under Mackay Regional Council jurisdiction, with another seven due for development in early 2012. The Sarina beaches and Slade Point Reserve also have local management plans in place. Implementation of priority projects in many of these coastal areas is now underway, including coastal fencing, weed control, and revegetation activities. More details of on-ground projects in progress on Mackay beaches can be found in the *Coasts and Communities project update June 2011*, now available online at www.reefcatchments.com.au.

Coastal community activities are being held across the region to provide local residents an opportunity to get involved at their beach.

As well as helping to improve the physical condition of our foreshores, these events also provide meaningful engagement opportunities for local residents to contribute to coastal management initiatives, and to meet their neighbours and those who work on our beaches.

PCL have been actively involved in coastal activities at Bucasia beach and Slade Point Reserve, providing vital support to local residents who want to get involved in caring for their beach.

The Coasts and Communities project is supported by Mackay Regional Council and Reef Catchments through the Natural Environment Levy and Australian Government's Caring for our Country program. For more information or to join the mailing list for future coastal activities and updates contact Kerri Woodcock on 49684207 or kerri.woodcock@reefcatchments.com.au.



Local residents helping out their beach. Image: K Woodcock

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)

Bruce Milles

Dianne Williams (Central Queensland Forestry Association)

Cr. Ross Walker (Mackay Regional Council)

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Pioneer Catchment Landcare

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Project Officer Dallas Milburn

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Newsletter Hayley Glover, Dallas Milburn

Upcoming Events

July

Thursday 7, from 8pm—SGAP Monthly Meeting. Guest presentation *Photos from Japan* by Peter Thompson. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court. Visitors welcome.

Friday 15, 8am—Slade Point Wetlands Walk with Irene Champion. Bring water, sturdy footwear, insect repellent, cameras, ID books and a chair to enjoy a light morning tea at the conclusion of the walk. Meet at Slade Pt Reserve, Teal St entrance.

Friday 29—National Schools Tree Day

Sunday 31—National Tree Day

August

Monday 1—Community Action Grant applications close. Contact PCL on 4944 1979 of information.

Thursday 4 from 8pm—SGAP Monthly Meeting. Guest presentation *A Northern Territory Experience—Plants and Wildlife by Grant Patterson*. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court. Visitors welcome.

Saturday 6, 8am—Working Bee at Morag McNichol Reserve. Contact Jim McNichol on 4942 8802 for details.

Saturday 6, Sunday 7, Monday 8, 8am—Healthy Soils workshop with RCS in Sarina, Mackay & Proserpine. Contact PCL to register, 4944 1979.

Sunday 7, 630am—MACBOCA trip to Wetlands Walkabout, Keeleys Rd. Meet at Keeleys Rd, Andergrove. Contact 49522964 or 0403172455 for further details.

Mackay Sustainable Living Guide

Developed in conjunction with The Natural Strategies Group, ecoMackay is designed to help Mackay regional residents take action to live more sustainably at home and in the community. The guide is packed with ideas, tips and inspiration about how small, easy changes can have positive impacts on the environment and your health and wellbeing - and save you money too!

www.ecomackay.com.au

Find lots of information on living more sustainably in your community, around the garden and home, services for the community and lots more!

Supported by:



CARING
FOR
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COUNTRY



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