



## Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

### September 2011

#### Old Weed Symposium – Pioneer Catchment Field Trip

The Old Weed Symposium was held in Mackay recently. Delegates from across Queensland attended the symposium which included 2 days of presentations and field trips.

The symposium theme “Back to Basics” was chosen after the realisation that a thorough scientific approach was detracting from the ability of on-ground staff to be involved. Guest speakers spoke on a range of topics including case studies highlighting the success of coordinated management in dealing with weed infestations. Evident in many presentations was the realisation that follow up management was just as important as the initial strategy.

Day 2 saw the choice of 4 field trips throughout the region. PCL organised the Urban and Peri-urban Field Trip with the theme “*from small weeds, big weeds grow*”. The 21 delegates visited five sites in and around Mackay. We walked along the Kommo Toera walk in Mackay Port Conservation area while Greg Steward discussed managing the Broad-leaved Pepper Tree. At the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens the main topic was water weeds with information provided by Maya Harrison and Carl Mitchell. We had lunch at a Land for Wildlife property at The Leap where the owner, Shanna Souvlis, is managing weeds without using chemicals. One of the delegates congratulated Shanna and said her work was ‘inspirational’.

After lunch we looked at the site of a Pond Apple eradication program, with an update on this program delivered by Dallas Milburn. Then we went on to Reliance Creek National Park to talk about Cats Claw Creeper. John Atkinson helped us understand the different management techniques for this weed and delegates looked for evidence of the tingid (biological control) that was introduced there some years ago. A highlight was when Habana resident Laurence Bonaventura led us into the Palm Vine Forest

which has only just dried out after the long wet season. A big thankyou to all the guest speakers who shared their stories on this field trip.



**Tackling Mother in Laws Tongue on a Peri-urban property. Image: S Souvlis**

#### Landcare Day in the Gardens & SGAP native plant sale

***'Kids ... Make a difference... In Your Backyard'***

Get involved with a range of activities for all ages - showcasing sustainability initiatives from local schools and community groups.

**Sunday 11th September,  
9am—2pm**

**Tropical Sun Lawn, Lagoon St, West Mackay.**  
For SGAP plant list or further information, contact



#### Weedbusters Week In Mackay September 2011

Weedbuster week raises awareness about the damaging potential of weeds in our environment. The week engages children and adults, and takes a look at what we as individuals, schools, community groups and private businesses could be doing to help this growing issue.

Weedbusters began in Queensland in 1994, going National three years later, then Internationally, being adopted by South Africa and New Zealand.

This years theme is to ‘Prevent, Restore, and Recover’. Prevent - weeds from establishing in new areas and managing existing ones. Restore - Queensland’s landscape by preventing further infestations, and Recover - from the damage done by floods and cyclones.

Dr Skoien of Biosecurity Queensland, said it was important everyone played a responsible role in environmental sustainability, making the necessary changes in behaviour to help the environment.

“Weeds cost Queensland an estimated \$600 million annually and have significant impacts on industries, natural ecosystems, and human and animal health,” she said.

Weedbusters is an ongoing annual event, if you would like to become involved visit the Weedbusters website [www.weedbusters.info](http://www.weedbusters.info) or contact the PCL office for further information.



**Volunteers busting weeds in Slade Pt Reserve.**

**Image: D Milburn**

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## Plant of the Month

### Scrambling Lily *Geitonoplesium cymosum*

A lovely slender perennial vine that takes its common name from its scrambling nature in the understorey. The young shoots are edible, and the berries sought after by a range of doves and bower birds. Early indigenous cultures used the wiry stems to bind specific implements.

**Leaves:** Alternate, linear to ovate, 2-13 x 0.2-3.5cm; petiole 0.5-1.5mm; multiveined but the mid-rib is conspicuous and raised on upper side.

**Flowers/Fruit:** Panicles of one to many, small white to mauve flowers; September to May. Berries are 0.7-2cm in diameter, bluish black; November to July.

**Propagation:** Grows readily from seed, hardy and adaptable.

**Habitat:** Mainly moist areas of eucalypt communities, rainforests (including littoral) and riparian zones.

**Distribution:** Coastal regions throughout NSW and QLD. In Mackay it can be found in the majority of ideal forest systems and riparian zones throughout the valley from Slade Pt Reserve to Eungella.

**Similarity:** Scrambling Lily is very hard to differentiate from Wombat Berry (*Eustrephus latifolius*) when not fertile. *E. latifolius* has several conspicuous veins on the lower surface whilst *G. cymosum* has a conspicuous and raised midrib on the upper surface. When in berry, *E. latifolius* develops bright yellowish orange capsules that split to reveal black seeds.

**Source:** R Melzer & J Plumb 2007, *Plants of Capricornia*.



Scrambling Lily in flower (top) and the early onset of berry (below).

Images: S & A Pearson

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## Weed of the Month

### Blue Morning Glory *Ipomoea indica*

Heralding from the *Convolvulaceae* family, Blue Morning Glory is a vigorous perennial climber capable of smothering large areas of vegetation throughout a range of different habitats.

**Description:** Twining vine, roots from the nodes. Leaves broadly ovate to orbicular in outline, 30-180 x 25-150mm, base heart shaped, margins entire or 3-lobed; dull green above with dense short soft hairs, paler and velvety hairy below, hairy stalks 10-130mm long. Bright blue to purplish flowers with a white to pinkish tube, 65-80mm across; borne in 2-several-flowered groups on 40-200mm stems. The conspicuous flowers are often the first giveaway of this plant. Fruit set has not been seen in Australia.

**The Problem:** *I. indica* is an environmental weed commonly seen invading road side habitats, as well as riparian, and rainforest margins. Its explosive growth patterns means it will efficiently smother natural regeneration, resulting in the loss of biodiversity and limiting the expansion of these margins. It is capable of climbing high into established canopy, or in the absence of structure, can produce a thick ground covering. Spread by vegetative material and/or water, contaminated soil on machinery, vehicles, contaminated forest mulch etc.

**Dealing with the problem:** Manual removal of the vine from the canopy is encouraged, this will lift the burden of the vine from the canopy helping it to recover quicker. The plant can be hand pulled if the infestation is deemed relatively small. All hand pulled matter should be left in a place to desiccate without the chance of re-establishment, incinerated or bagged for landfill. Heavy mulching of the area is advised to discourage regrowth. Herbicide control is an efficient management method for larger infestations. Phone PCL for further information.

**Pioneer Catchment:** There are established infestations of *I. indica* throughout the Mackay region, particularly along water courses, including the Pioneer River. Often infestations are left unmanaged as it is not seen to be a high risk weed, although if left unmanaged, impacts can be severe. PCL will be happy to deal with any concerns raised by landholders and can advise accordingly.

**Source:** MRPMG, *Are your Garden Plants Going Bush*. DEEDI fact sheet. [www.dpi.qld.gov.au](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au)



*I. indica* leaf and flower

Image: MRPMG

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## Land for Wildlife—Rocky Outcrops

Adapted from M Meng, SLCMA



Rocky outcrops are critically important environments with their island-like formations protruding above the surrounding environment. They can vary in size from many hectares to just a few small square meters. Outcrops support unique native plant and animal species which may not occur in other landscapes.

The crevices, slabs and vertical rock faces provide essential habitat: Crevices provide protection for specialised outcrop dwellers including various species of skinks, geckos and spiders. Crevices collect rainwater, creating pools for drinking and support communities of aquatic invertebrates. Bare rock surfaces provide basking sites for a variety of reptile species. The breeding cycle of many butterfly species rely on rocky outcrops. The males practice 'hill-topping', where hundreds of male butterflies congregate on top of outcrops waiting for a suitable mate. The shape of larger outcrops creates thermal updrafts for many raptors.

There are many disturbances and threats which can detrimental effects on these wildlife, including land clearing, overgrazing, pest invasion and altered fire regimes. Protecting and improving the ecological value of rocky outcrops can be done through best land management practices such as:

- Practice time-controlled grazing to manage dense regrowth and weeds;
- Strategic weed and feral animal control;
- Revegetation: this needs to be done with extreme care as too much vegetation cover, planted in the wrong place, shades out critical basking sites;
- Incorporate fallen timber by relocating logs and old fence posts which would otherwise be burnt;
- Retain dead shrubs;
- Encourage surrounding remnant vegetation;

Information sourced from: D. Lindenmayer (2011) *What Makes a Good Farm for Wildlife?*



The Copper-tailed skink (*Ctenotus taeniolatus*) enjoys warming themselves on rocky outcrops.

Image: S MacDonald

## Slade Point Wetlands Outing

Finally, with good weather in July, PCL held its final information walk through the Slade Point Reserve wetlands. Irene Champion lead the group on a fascinating walk focusing on species both common and unique to the wetland ecosystem, as well as the weeds and issues currently threatening the area.

The reserve is managed by a number of stakeholders who attended, including Mackay Regional Council, Reef Catchments, and Department of Environment & Resource Management. This fragile area of remnant ecosystem requires ongoing support and management in key areas in this popular reserve. Many interested locals turned up for the day with a range of interesting questions regarding the fragility of the habitat, with open discussions on what the future holds for the reserve.

Although this project has now wrapped up, PCL will continue to work with these stakeholders to help raise awareness, publicise events, as well as continued assistance in on going management.



Irene Champion discussing the ecosystem in Fern Valley.

Image: D Milburn

The Slade Point Reserve Project was made possible through funding from the Australian Government's Caring For Our Country.

## Soil Health Workshop with RCS

Two successful Healthy Soil Workshops with RCS were held in Sarina in Mackay in August thanks to funding received from the Australian Governments Caring for our Country and Mackay Regional Council.

David McLean from RCS facilitated the workshop which introduced key concepts of healthy soils including the physical, chemical and biological

indicators. David discussed the role of soil health in weed management, pasture management for improved soils and how the role of land managers influence these linkages.

Workshop participants represented a diverse group of land managers throughout the region from peri-urban block owners to horticulture and grazing land managers. This diversity of views enabled some interesting discussion on how to achieve desired goals and outcomes.

Workshops supported by Central Queensland Coast Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country and Mackay Regional Council.



Image: SLCMA

## 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 (Australian Forest Growers)

Cr. Ross Walker (Mackay Regional Council)

### Pioneer Catchment office

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### Pioneer Catchment Landcare

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**Newsletter** Hayley Glover, Dallas Milburn

## Upcoming Events September

**Saturday 10, 9-11am (Ball Bay), 2-4pm (Holiday Bay)**—Mackay coastal community activities, contact 4968 4207 for more information.

**Sunday 11, 9am-2pm**—Landcare Day in the Gardens. "Kids make a difference... in your backyard" and SGAP plant sale. Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. Contact PCL for further details.

**Thursday 22, 6:30pm**—Transition Towns meeting. The movement supports community-led responses to climate change and shrinking supplies of cheap energy by building resilient and more liveable communities. Come along and share your ideas or projects with like-minded people. The Environment Centre, 156 Wood St, Mackay. Ph Deb 0428 380191.

**Tuesday 20 to Friday 23rd**—2011 Queensland Landcare Conference, Ayr.

## October

**Saturday 1, 8am**—Working Bee at Morag McNichol Reserve. Contact Jim McNichol on 4942 8802 for details.

**Sunday 2, 5.45am**—MACBOCA outing to Lake Clive, Cape Hillsborough. Meet Conningsby Service Station. Ph 49522964 or 49540937 for further information.

**Thursday 6 from 8pm**—SGAP Monthly Meeting. *Travelling with a SGAP Member to Tasmania or New Zealand* by Bev Weston. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court. Visitors welcome.

**Saturday 8, 9-11am**—Join us at Illuka park to welcome the migratory waders back to Mackay and learn about the shorebirds that share our coastline. Illuka Park, Town Beach.

**Saturday 8, 3-5pm**—Mackay coastal community activities, Waverley St, Bucasia. Contact 4968 4207 for information.

**Wednesday 12**—National Ride to Work Day 2011. To register or more information visit [www.ride2work.com.au](http://www.ride2work.com.au)

**Saturday 22 8:30—2pm**, Volunteer with Conservation Volunteers Australia at Sandfly Creek. Contact CVA on 4951 0933.

Supported by:



CARING  
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OUR  
COUNTRY

## WetlandCare Art and Photography Competition

The theme of the competition is Wetlands, Tourism and Recreation. The closing date for entries is 2 December, visit [www.wetlandcare.com.au](http://www.wetlandcare.com.au) for more information.



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