



Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

October 2011

Notice of Annual General Meeting of Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc.

When: Tuesday 18th October, 4:30pm-6.30pm

Where: 6 Swayne Street, North Mackay

What: All members and friends of PCL are warmly welcomed to PCL's AGM, Drinks and nibblies will be provided

RSVP: Please RSVP by 14th October for catering purposes.

Agenda for Annual General Meeting:

1. Minutes of the previous meeting
2. Chairman's Annual Report
3. Auditor's report
4. Election of Management Committee members and positions
5. Appointment of Auditor

All members are encouraged to attend. If you cannot attend, please contact PCL on 4944 1979 for a proxy form.

Queensland Landcare Conference

The Queensland Landcare Conference was held in Ayr, between the 20th-23rd September. The theme for this years conference was Generations of Guardians with a large focus on learning from all generations and engaging the next generation.

Presentations were interesting and diverse including a keynote address by Dr John Williams who spoke about the need for substantial reform to the operation of agricultural and natural resource sciences to avoid a global food crisis without further damaging the environment.

Workshops topics included engaging young people and the broader community, sustainable agriculture, carbon in the soil, managing rangelands and case studies from community groups and NRM bodies about the responses to the natural disasters of summer 2011.

Delegates selected from four field trips including a coastal and Indigenous tour of the Burdekin which saw the control of prickly acacia using camels, and talked with Traditional Owners and what they are doing to educate the community.

PCL Management Committee members Dave Hunter, Wendy Eiteneuer and Di Williams attended the conference and participated in the field trip which took in the wetlands of the Bowling Green Bay National Park and a tour of the Australian Institute of Marine Science facility.



Delegates visited Gubulla Munda at Plantation Park and heard about how traditional owners are engaging their young people in cultural practises on the coast. Photo PCL

Managing Horses on Small Properties Workshop

In November PCL will be hosting a workshop promoting the safety care and welfare, for your horses and your environment.

Guest Presenter Jane Myers

The workshop will be presented by Jane Myers who has been involved in the horse industry for over 30 years and has been the author of a range of CSIRO horse management publications.

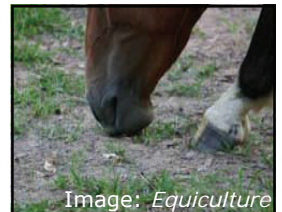


Image: Equiculture

The workshops will cover a range of topics including;

- Horse characteristics.
- Pasture improvement and management for horses.
- Management of water, manure and vegetation.
- Property design and planning.

When: Sunday 13th November 9am-3pm

Cost: \$20 per person, or \$30 for 2 (includes lunch)

RSVP: Registration and payment required by 8th November.

For further information on this event and to register please phone the PCL office on 4944 1979 or email admin@pioneercatchment.org.au.

This project is supported by the Central Old Coast Landcare Network, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country.

Plant of the Month

Native Frangipani *Hymenosporum flavum*

Hymenosporum flavum heralds from the *Pittosporaceae* family, it is however, the only member of the *Hymenosporum* genus. Its common name is derived from its highly fragrant flowers, similar to that of the common Frangipani.

Leaves: Alternate, short stalked and soft thin textured leaves are 8-16cm in length; broadest above the middle, taper to a fine point at the apex and narrow into the base. They are smooth dark green above and somewhat hairy beneath.

Flowers/Fruit: 5 petalled and tubular, about 2.5cm in diameter, and darken from cream to yellow with age. They are borne in highly conspicuous terminal sprays throughout late spring.

The fruit are brown pear-shaped, two valved, capsules which contain many papery flat, glossy brown, winged seeds stacked in laminated flowers.

Propagation: Carried out from fresh seed but cuttings are also successful. It is a hardy plant, growing satisfactorily in dry climates if supplementary water is available. It grows in well drained soils, those with a high organic content are preferred. Because of its generally narrow habit of growth, the plant can be recommended for small gardens. Plants flower best in an open, sunny position but can be grown successfully in shady areas.

Habitat: Occurs in a variety of rainforest types, including riverine rainforest types in this area. *Hymenosporum flavum* can be seen in flower now on the northern banks of the Pioneer River along the Maraju-Yakapari Rd, downstream of the Dumbleton Weir.

Distribution: Eastern coastal Australia from Atherton to the Hawkesbury River in NSW. Also found in New Guinea.

Source: Champion, I. and Alcock, H. (1989) *One Hundred and One Trees of Mackay*, The Mackay Branch of Society for Growing Australian Plants. Holliday, I. (1998) *Australian Plants June Edition*, Journal of the Australian Native Plants Society.



Image: D Milburn

Weed of the Month

Devil's Fig *Solanum torvum*

Devil's Fig is a commonly found weed throughout Queensland's coastal regions. A native of the West Indies, it is commonly overlooked yet it has the potential to be disruptive and invasive. It is primarily an environmental weed of disturbed areas, particularly along water courses.

Description: An open, branching shrub growing to 3 metres, armed with scattered broad-based slightly hooked thorns. Leaves are alternate or paired, broad-elliptic to ovate, 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. White star-shaped flowers with central cones of yellow stamens, 20-25mm diameter; are borne on many-flowered axillary racemes or sprays. The fruit is a globular berry, 12-17mm in diameter, dull yellow or brownish when ripe with many egg-shaped cream or brown seeds about 2mm long.

The Problem: *Solanum torvum* produces berries that are readily eaten and spread by birds and by flowing water. The plant is an efficient coloniser of disturbed areas, rainforests, coastal communities and creek banks. Its rapid growth patterns means it will out compete other native grasses and herbs and can develop into a mono culture in fertile and moist conditions, under full sun. The plant also has the capability to produce flowers all year round.

Dealing with the Problem: Limiting the disturbance to soils in prone areas is highly beneficial to reducing the spread of this plant. However this is not always feasible, particularly along creek banks that are prone to flooding. Efficient management will reduce populations and limit the amount of seed that is spread. Cut stump and paste is an efficient method for mature trees and herbicide control options are available. Please phone PCL if you would like more information on the control of Devil's Fig.

Pioneer Catchment: *Solanum torvum* is wide spread in the Mackay region and is particularly apparent along water courses leading into Reliance Creek Catchment, along the Pioneer River (particularly in the lower reaches) as well as Bakers and Sandy Creek tributaries. Currently little is being done to manage this weed and landholders are urged to reduce populations where feasible.



Solanum torvum Image: D Milburn

Source: MRPMG, 'Weeds of The Mackay Whitsunday Region'; BSES Bulletin, 1989. 'Weeds in Australian Cane Fields'.

Get Involved! Coastal residents and nesting turtles



Seven species of sea turtles are found throughout the world and 6 live and nest in Queensland. All species of sea turtle are considered to be Endangered or Vulnerable.

The Flatback Turtle is the main species of sea turtle nesting on mainland beaches. Green and Loggerhead Turtles have been recorded laying, although in much smaller numbers.

Turtle nesting season begins in the Mackay region around mid-October to early January with hatchlings emerging until April. Nesting occurs on most of the regions beaches. Each female will return 3 times on average, 10 to 14 days apart to lay approximately 50 eggs each time.

These turtles are nesting in a developed area sharing the beaches with the community and as such are unique, their survival is very important indeed.

Unfortunately, there are a number of threats to nesting survival, particularly inappropriate lighting and vegetation clearing in coastal areas. Nesting females and hatchlings become disorientated by unrestricted light, which can result in mortality. Nesting females may also be deterred from emerging from the sea onto beaches where uncontrolled lighting is present. This may cause her to abort her eggs at sea.

Simple steps can help avoid these problems, including:

- Close curtains to obscure internal lights from the beach;
- Shield light fixtures and replace pole mounted lights with low level fixtures;
- No fires or torch use on beaches after dark during sea turtle nesting season.

Much more information can be found about turtles of the Mackay region and what coastal residents can do to help the regions turtle population:

www.mackayturtles.org.au



Mackay & District Turtle Watch Association needs volunteers to get involved in whatever capacity suits—from walking a beach and reporting any findings to full scale night patrols—all training will be provided. Please contact M&DTWA on 4954 9613.

Heliconia Warning

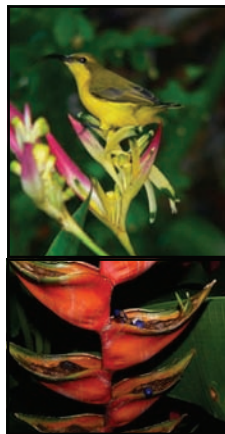
By Steve & Alison Pearson

Fresh warnings have arisen about the potential spread of common introduced plants found in the tropics, *Heliconia* species. Several species are being grown in local gardens. Heliconias are closely related to bananas and originate from tropical, central and southern America.

A few years ago a TV program with Peter Cundall did a show about Heliconias and a Heliconia farm in the Northern Territory. The program reported that Heliconias had no seeds and if you wanted to grow your own you had to buy plants. Also, that Australia did not have pollinating agents, so it was safe to grow Heliconias as they would not spread into the environment.

At the time Alison and I were seeing Sunbirds visiting our 3 different *Heliconias* species (*H. collinsiana*, *H. humilis*, *H. psittacorum*) and this was followed by fruiting of each species. Later, we saw Black Butcher Birds visiting the ripe fruit and eating them. Now we are finding small *Heliconia* plants coming up in the rainforest around our home. Maybe people of the north who are in the area of Sunbirds and Black Butcher Bird should keep a look out for seedlings coming up in their area.

Anyone who suspects the presence of an emerging *Heliconia* seedling should contact PCL (4944 1979) for further information.

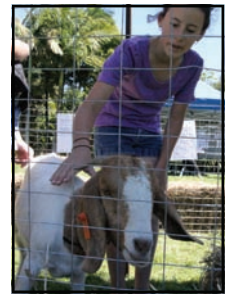


Heliconias.
Image: S&A
Pearson.

Landcare Day in the Gardens

The sun was shining during a beautiful September morning for 2011 Landcare Day in the Gardens. Kids, young and old, came to the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens and got involved with the various interactive activities. Including, the live bug display with the Friends of Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens, water saving activities with Mackay Regional Council, cooking with bananas with FunKey Foods and learning how to look after backyard chickens with Luke from the Community Gardens. Participants got to play with water bugs and learn to identify some native and weedy aquatic plants with PCL.

A particular highlight was the photographic competition with over 75 entries on the theme of "Forests" for the International Year of the Forests. PCL funded the prizes for the junior section and presented winners Paige Smith and Blake Fox with brand new bikes which should get them around town without any carbon emissions! Congratulations Blake and Paige!



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 October

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

Tuesday 18, 4.30-6.30pm—PCL Annual General Meeting. All members and friends welcome. RSVP by 14th Oct for catering purposes 4944 1979.

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

November

Thursday 3 from 8pm—SGAP Monthly Meeting. *Travelling with a SGAP Member to Broken Hill* by Margaret Lane. 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, 5.45am—MacBoca outing to Tedlands, Koumala. Meet at Tourist Information Centre, Nebo Rd. Contact 49522964 or 0403172455 for further details.

Sunday 13, 9am-3pm—Managing Horses on Small Properties workshop. To register or for further information contact PCL office.

Supported by:



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

Mackay Regional Carpool

An initiative of Mackay Regional Council, this free, online service is available now for anyone who wants to save money and reduce their carbon footprint. **How does it work?** Simply register on the website, select your journey and search for others going in the same direction. You can meet up on route or at a local public place.

www.mackayregioncarpool.org



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