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Let us know on [admin@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:admin@pioneercatchment.org.au)

We also regularly update our Facebook Page: Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc.

### Another move...

...but temporary this time. To make way for the construction of an amazing new nursery facility at the Natural Environment Centre (NEC) in Swayne St we had to move out all our plants, about 2500 of them, to temporary locations. So, for the week leading up to Thursday 15 May there was much activity in the nursery sorting plants for the move and distributing as many as possible to temporary homes. Management Committee member Di Williams took about 750 to her greenhouse at Eungella. Thankyou Di, and don't forget the frost cover! National Parks offered the use of the shade-house at their depot at Slade Point, where they tidied up and revamped the watering system. They also collected benches from the NEC and put them in place for our plants. The whole team there helped - PCL is very grateful for this support and we look forward to growing some species for our beautiful National Parks. Iona and two nursery volunteers, Nicole and Robyn, helped sort and move the trays of plants. Just as we were finishing the rain started...to help settle our plants into their new home.

Margaret Lane

*The moving team at the National Parks nursery, Slade Point. (M. Lane)*



### One, Two, Three....Bungee!

This year is the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. To celebrate, there was a special party last month, and the Friends of the MRBG unveiled the lovely book that they helped to finance, *The Bungy Jumping Caterpillars*. Written and beautifully illustrated by the very talented Maya Harrison, Carolyn Atkinson and Kate Brunner, the book is the story of two Zodiac Moths (also known as North Queensland Day Moths, *Alcides metaurus*), who discover that the only food they like is the leaves of the Tree Omphalea, *Omphalea celata*. Order your copy of this educational and inspirational book from the Botanic Gardens if you haven't already - it has a limited print run!



### Nest Cylinders For Wildlife

PCL is involved in a very exciting project to provide 50 nesting cylinders to landholders in the Land for Wildlife program. The cylinders will provide places for Squirrel Gliders, small bats, and medium sized parrots to nest, and have been designed with the assistance of Tina Ball at Queensland Parks & Wildlife.

Each design is different, depending on the nesting preferences of the cylinder's intended inhabitant. The gliders, for example, require stable temperatures, so their cylinders are insulated. They have small entrance holes so that larger mammals and birds are less likely to use them, and are fitted with a little ladder inside so that the gliders can crawl down and snuggle in the base of the tube.



*Inhabitant of a nest box constructed in a previous project. (T. Ball)*

Bats prefer tight spaces to roost, so inside their pipes, there are vertical baffles fitted, with scored lines to allow the bats to grip. The bottoms of the bat cylinders are open to prevent waste build up and to make invasions by other animals less likely.

The third design is a simple cylinder with a hole and a perch - this could be suitable for parrots such as rosellas, since the cylinder design mimics a hollow tree trunk.

If you're thinking that all these designs sound like a lot of work, you're probably right. Chris McAdam from the Iona West Men's Shed is working hard to follow our specifications using donated and discounted materials, and to guide the volunteers to make sturdy, safe, suitable homes for these cute critters.

The boxes will be distributed to land holders whose properties are in suitable glider, bat or rosella habitat. The project was funded by Mackay Regional Council, because due to land clearing, there are fewer suitable tree hollows for our native fauna to nest in. More information about the project and about how to use nest boxes will be presented at the Land for Wildlife Padaminka Field Walk on Friday the 7th of June.

## 2013 State and Territory Landcare Awards

Nominations are open in the 2013 Landcare Awards. There are nine categories in the QLD awards, including for Individual Landcarer, Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices, Partnerships with Landcare, Young Landcare Leader and Junior Landcare Team.

If you would like more information about nominating a Landcarer you know, please contact the PCL office, or see the website: [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)

## Plant of the month

*This plant can be seen growing in the Mackay Regional Botanical Gardens, and is featured in "The Bungee Jumping Caterpillars".*

*Omphalea Celata* EUPHORBIACEAE

### Tree Omphalea

**A vulnerable plant known from only a few small patches of Central Queensland forest, but with a fascinating natural history set to become more well known now that there is children's story about it.**

**Description:** *O. celata* is a small tree with a weeping habit and strong tuber-like roots.

**Leaves:** The leaves are simple and alternate with long grooved petioles and two conspicuous glands near the base of the leaf blade.

**Flowers and fruit:** Terminal sprays of tiny greenish flowers contain more male than female flowers. Fruits are 2 to 3 lobed and about 5-6 cm in diameter. Trees are pollinated by the aforementioned (See page 1) North Qld Day Moth, which flies huge distances, presumably attracted by the smell of the flowers, and has caterpillars who strip the leaves off the trees a couple of times a year.

**Distribution:** Limited naturally to Hazlewood Gorge and Gloucester Island, although its growing fame is seeing it cultivated in Mackay gardens now.

**Propagation:** Seedlings germinate readily from fresh marble-sized seeds removed from the fruits. Even newly germinated plants have a much thickened tuber-like root at the base of the plant with thinner fibrous roots growing off the main 'tap'. Gardeners should be careful to grow the tree away from the driveway and the house as the roots are known to create mounds and crack concrete.

Sources: I. Champion, SGAP Newsletter. Images: S & A Pearson.



## Weed spotting this month

*A pretty but invasive garden escapee.*

*Tradescantia spathacea* COMMELINACEAE

### Moses-in-the-Cradle; Rhoeo

Recently at the Farleigh Pam Fete a number of people mentioned they were having difficulty with this plant expanding beyond their gardens and they are not sure how to control it. No surprise that Moses-in-the-cradle is listed as an environmental "TIME BOMB"! It's a native of South America and has been widely promoted by the nursery industry as a lovely green and purple-leaved plant for garden edges or as a perennial filler.

Moses-in-the-Cradle or Rhoeo is closely related to the weedy Wandering Jew. As with other *Tradescantia* spp. it has toxic sap that can cause irritation to people, pets and native animals. It also is a garden escapee - invading creek banks, disturbed areas, and open forests close to habitation.

**Description:** Perennial, tufted herb with a short trunk-like stem to 0.2m; reproduces from stems.

**Leaves:** In basal rosettes, broadly linear to lanceolate, up to 300-400 x 40-60mm, fleshy, upper surface green, lower surface distinctive reddish-purple.

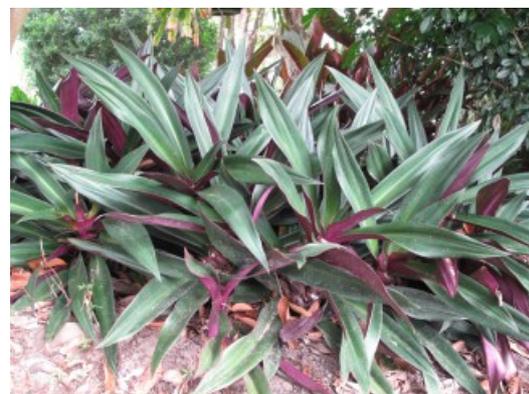
**Flowers:** Small white, 3 petalled, surrounded by a purple boat-shaped spathe.

**Fruits/Seeds:** Papery capsules with 3 valves. Seeds small, dark brown.

**Spread by:** Vegetative material and seeds in garden waste, water and contaminated soil.

**Control:** The Mackay Regional Pest Management Group recommend "Remove and Replace", and make sure you bag up the plants and dispose of them safely - either burn or put in your green bin. Call the Landcare office for advice on removal methods.

Sources: [http://www.hear.org/pier/species/tradescantia\\_spathacea.htm](http://www.hear.org/pier/species/tradescantia_spathacea.htm); [http://www.floridata.com/ref/t/trad\\_spa.cfm](http://www.floridata.com/ref/t/trad_spa.cfm). Photo: S.von Fahland



## Reef Guardians Stewardship Action GOOSEPONDS COMMUNITY EVENT

**When:** Saturday 15 June 2013, 9.00am to 12.00pm

**Where:** Gooseponds, behind North Mackay Bowls Club on Malcomson St, (parking available down The Goosewalk off Malcomson St.)

*Sponsored by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Mackay Regional Council, CANEGROWERS and Glenella State School.*

- Demonstration session on fishways (10.00am) & revegetation (10.30am)
- Eco Barge Clean Seas - marine debris education display
- RSPCA – responsible pet ownership
- Plants for sale from the Society for Growing Australian Plants
- Mackay Regional Council Waste Education Trailer
- Macro-invertebrate activities with Glenella State School
- Learn how cane farmers minimize off-farm impacts
- Sailing with Mackay Model Mariners
- Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group
- Reef Catchments
- Conservation Volunteers Australia
- Food and drinks available

*Working  
together today  
for a healthier  
reef tomorrow!*

**For further information contact:** Kate Finch - 4951 3454

## Marian Community Group

held a successful working bee last weekend, where 16 volunteers planted about 100 native trees and 50 native grasses. Mackay Regional Council provided mulch, and funding for the trees was received from the Reef Catchments Public Fund. It was a fun day out on a beautiful stretch of the Pioneer River; we even saw a platypus! There will be another working bee on the 22nd of June, everyone is welcome.



*The dedicated volunteers of the Marian Community Group do a fantastic job of looking after their local section of the Pioneer riverbank. (I.Flett)*

## Fun at Far Beach

Far Beach is the location of a new project funded this year by the QLD Government under their Everyone's Environment Grant program. At this beach we'll be continuing work that has been carried out intermittently over many years to restore native dune vegetation, remove weeds and litter, and enhance the biodiversity and amenity value of the beach and nearby park. Dune vegetation helps prevent erosion, and the dunes themselves form a protective barrier for the town behind.

The first week of work will be taking place at the start of July, and to celebrate, we are organising a day for the community to come and learn about coastal ecosystems on Saturday July 6. We'll be removing litter, weeding and tree planting, and there will be talks about marine turtles, shorebirds and other interesting topics. It's a day for volunteering and socialising, so bring enthusiasm, your friends and an appetite. Get in touch with Iona at the PCL office for more information.

## Learning about soil

Farmers understand that the soil is the most valuable asset on their property. However, soils are complex and what is good for one soil type might not be good for another. To help landholders get to know their soils better, a series of free 'Understanding Soils' workshops is being held in the Mackay-Whitsunday region during the week of the 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> of June.

These events aim to provide farmers with an understanding of the impact of soil properties on plant growth. Farmers who come to the workshops will learn about the nature of soils, the importance of maintaining organic carbon, and what farmers can do to improve soils and profitability. Speakers will be Dr Ross Coventry, John Hughes, and the Regional Landcare Facilitator for the local catchment. Each day will consist of a morning workshop and afternoon practical activities on a local farm, with lunch provided in between.

John Hughes, of Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (QDAFF) encourages all local farmers to attend, saying "Understanding the interactions of soil physical and chemical properties in the topsoil and subsurface zones is fundamental for optimising crop growth. We know a lot about the top 25 centimetres of our soils but much less about our sub-

soils; observing the soil pits in the afternoon segment of the workshops should be very interesting for growers."

These workshops are part of a larger body of work being undertaken in the region by Reef Catchments, Landcare, local independent agronomy business Farmacist and QDAFF to understand local soils. Research into the potential of our soils to sequester carbon and farm management practices that will reduce carbon emissions has been funded under the Australian Government's Action on the Ground Clean Energy Futures Fund and is now well underway.

"Managing carbon in the tropical environment is different to temperate climates so it is important that we conduct research here in our own region," explained Will Higham, Reef Catchments Land and Water Operations Manager. The research being undertaken in the region over the next few years could create new approved farming practices that will allow farmers in Mackay Whitsunday to eventually enter the carbon market.

For more information call John Hughes on 0428104250, or to register for one of the workshops (Koumala – Tuesday 11 June; Eton – Wednesday 12 June; Homebush – Thursday 13 June), contact Iona on 49441979 or Saskia on 49561388.



*A soil profile under a cane farm at Farleigh (J. Hughes)*

## Upcoming Events

### JUNE

**Thursday 6, 7.30pm** - SGAP General Meeting including a presentation about photography by Steve Pearson. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court.

**Friday 7, 9.00am-12.00pm**, Land for Wildlife field walk at Padaminka. Contact Kate Steel for more information: 0447 749 769

**Saturday 8, 1.00pm** - World Oceans Day picnic and giant fish sign. Bluewater Quay BBQs, Lot 143 River St, Mackay. RSVP: <http://www.dudgeonpoint.org/wocbbq>

**Tuesday 11 - Thursday 13**, Understanding Soils Workshops.

**Tues 11, 8.15am-3.30pm**. Koumala SES Shed, Bull St and Walpole's farm in pm.

**Wed 12, 8.15am-3.30pm**. John and Helen Pastega's farm, Marian-Eton Rd, Eton.

**Thurs 13, 8.15am-3.30pm**. BSES, Te Kowai and Camilleri Brothers' farm in pm.

**Saturday 15**, Coastcare Activities. Contact Claire for more info: 0429155841

**9-11am** Ball Bay - Meet at end of Buoro St.

**2-4pm** Bucasia - Meet at the access track near the northern end of Bucasia Beachfront Caravan Resort.

**Saturday 15, 9.00am-12.00pm** - Gooseponds Community Event. Meet at the Gooseponds behind North Mackay Bowls Club on Malcomson St.

**Sunday 16, 8.00am-1.00pm** - Pioneer Valley Show. Eungella Road, Finch Hatton. Call 4958 3162 for information or see [www.pioneervalleyshow.com.au](http://www.pioneervalleyshow.com.au)

**Wednesday 19, 8.00am** - MRBG Regional Forest Working Bee.

**Saturday 22, 8.00-11.00** - Marian Community Group Working Bee. Meet opposite Tolcher Lane, Marian for a morning of tree planting along the river.

### JULY

**Thursday 4, 7.30pm** - SGAP General Meeting including a talk about Coastal Projects by Kerri Woodcock. Mackay Gem and Craft Society Hall, Leisure Court.

**Saturday 6, 8.00am** - Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve Working Bee. Contact: Joyce on 4955 0153

**Saturday 6, 9.00am-3.00pm** - Far Beach Community Day. Presentations by Birdlife Mackay, Mackay Turtlewatch and others. Weeding, planting, beach cleanup and free barbeque.

**Sunday 7, 6.30am** - Birdlife Mackay outing to Mt Ossa and Mclean's Property. Meet at Coningsby Service Station. Contact 49522964

An exciting project is happening on Owen's Creek, and we need your help. The project managers are trying to source logs for a river improvement project. They should be 5-8m long, and 250-650mm diameter. If they still have the root ball, that is even better. Please contact Iona if you can help or if you would like more information.



As well as the picnic at Bluewater Quay on Saturday June 8, there are other interesting events organised to celebrate World Oceans Day.

Reef Live is a unique online experience happening for 12 hours from Friday June 7 at 10.00am. For these 12 hours, a world-wide audience will be able to join a team of Great Barrier Reef experts as they dive and discuss GBR issues. Anyone can log in and ask questions via Twitter, and divers will be speaking live from underwater to people using Google Hangout around the world. There is more information coming soon from: [www.worldoceansday.org](http://www.worldoceansday.org) and Tourism and Events Queensland on their Queensland Blog.

### Who's who at Pioneer Catchment & Landcare

#### Management Committee

**Chair** Margaret Lane (SGAP—Mackay Branch)

**Deputy Chair** Dave Hunter

**Treasurer** Dianne Williams

**Secretary (Non voting)** Wendy Eiteneuer

**Committee Members** Irene Champion, Di Salau, Cr Theresa Morgan, John Atkinson

#### Pioneer Catchment Office

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## Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

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