

The Management Committee and officers wish all our members, friends, stakeholders, landholders and volunteers best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.



PCL office will be closed from 22/12/14—05/01/15

Australian Plants Diversity Bursary

Diversity is in our Nature

The Society for Growing Australian Plants (SGAP), Qld Region, invites you to make an application for this award to fund attending the biennial national conference of the Australian Native Plants Society in Canberra, November 2015.

The aim of the bursary is to promote the values and diversity of Australian native plants and to particularly encourage interested people to gain special knowledge as active members of SGAP branches throughout Queensland.

If you have a specific interest, knowledge or expertise in native plants gained through education or work experience at Universities, TAFE colleges, Botanic Gardens, National Parks, local Councils, Industry, Land Care groups, Nurseries, etc. you should make an application!

For information on the application process contact m.lane@mky.net.au, or 0407 639 623

For more information on SGAP: www.sgapqld.org.au and the conference: <http://anpsa.org.au>

Welcome to the new **Management Committee**, elected at the AGM held on 6 November.

Chairman: Dave Hunter
Deputy Chair: Di Salau
Treasurer: Di Williams
Secretary (non-voting): Wendy Eiteneuer
Irene Champion
Caitlin Davies
Grant Howard

PCL acknowledges the commitment of these people, as well as that of outgoing Committee members John Atkinson, Robyn Law and Margaret Lane. A particularly warm welcome to Land for Wildlife landholder Grant Howard.

Images from the Soil Health Symposium



15 people walked through the Reliance CK Palm Vine Forest on 20/11/14 led by John Atkinson and Cr Laurence Bonaventra.

Tracking our Turtles

A sea turtles tracking project has recently commenced in our region. The project is a collaboration between Mackay & District Turtlewatch Assoc. and James Cook University to understand the behaviour of Flatback turtles in Central Queensland. Mackay Regional Council's Natural Environment Levy has provided funding for 4 turtles to be tagged this season. The four turtles were named by children from local schools, and all four have been tagged and released. Next season 4 more turtles will be tagged and monitored, with funding from Gambling Community Benefit Fund.

You can follow the turtles on http://www.seaturtle.org/tracking/?project_id=1061



Livia being released with tracking device attached. Image: contributed by MDTW

Plants of the Month

Planchonia careya

Family: Lecythidaceae

Cocky Apple, Cockatoo Apple

Small, semi- deciduous tree, with coarse rough grey-brown fissured slightly corky bark and crooked branches. This tree is common on the coastal fringe and occurs in littoral forests, eucalypt forests and woodlands. It is just finishing flowering locally and is setting fruit. Cocky Apple can be seen in our coastal vegetation and in the Botanic Gardens in the Coastal Lowlands and in the Dry Tropics bed of the Regional Flora Terraces.

Leaves: Simple, alternate, ovate to obovate about 17x8cm, with a winged stalk and a prominent mid-vein; margins entire or slightly toothed; dull green above and paler beneath. Leaves turn bright orange-red before falling.

Flowers: Nocturnal, late spring, about 7cm across, with long showy stamens, pink-scarlet in the lower half and white above. Fallen flowers carpet the ground each morning

Fruit/Seeds: The smooth green ovoid fruits, about 8cm long are crowned by persistent calyx lobes and a long slender style; contain several seeds inside fleshy-fibrous pulp. They mature in summer. The fruit is eaten by the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo and the nectar by Rainbow Lorikeets, Little Friarbirds and numerous other honey eaters.



Nauclea orientalis

Family: Rubiaceae (prev. in Naucleaceae)

Leichhardt Tree, Yellow Cheesewood

A medium to tall, more or less deciduous tree with horizontal branching, fairly open to dense canopy and rough, grey bark. It is a common tree of moist environments in lowland rainforest, close to streams and swamps including Melaleuca swamps. It is flowering and setting fruit now and can be seen in the remnant vegetation in the Gooseponds, at Slade Point and in the Botanic Gardens along the Lagoon edge including at the bottom of "Finch Hatton Gorge".

Leaves: Large, opposite, ovate, from 10-30 X 10-20cm; glossy green above and paler underneath with conspicuous veins. New growth is protected by large oval stipules, up to 3cm long.

Flowers: Small yellow and white flowers occur in dense globular heads, about 2.5cm in diameter, and are borne among the new foliage which tends to partially hide them.

Fruit/Seeds: Fruits are bumpy, globular, about 3cm across; light green, quite soft when ripe; and contain numerous small seeds.

The dark yellow, close grained timber, that gives rise to the second common name, is suitable for cabinet making. The Leichhardt Tree on the Pioneer River has historical significance to Mackay.

Source: *101 Trees of Mackay*, SGAP Mackay Branch

Images: S&A Pearson



Weed Spotting

Solanum torvum

Devil's Fig, Thornapple

Family: Solanaceae

Watch for this nasty piece of work appearing in your revegetation or where you have disturbed land. It also invades rainforests, coastal communities, creek banks and gardens.

Devil's Fig is a spreading or scrambling shrub, 2-3m high, armed with scattered broad-based slightly hooked thorns 3-8mm long; new growth has fawn star hairs. It can easily be identified by the large leaves, the margins of which have 2-4 triangular lobes on each side; the white star shaped flowers; the globular berries, 13-17mm in diameter....and the thorns.

For more information consult Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region, available from PCL office or Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens.



Latest addition to the Land for Wildlife family



Grant Howard has a diverse block, near Kuttabul, that contains dry eucalypt vegetation and a small section of lush tropical rainforest gully. Grant is interested in preserving the natural vegetation and restoring areas that have been previously cleared. He has been busy removing weeds from the block—he is on a Lantana mission!- and is keen to replenish the cleared areas with local native plant species. Funding from Reef Catchments through Reef Rescue Program has assisted Grant to erect fencing to protect vegetation and creek areas from cattle. Grant has erected wildlife friendly fencing with this funding.

Grant has committed more time to Landcare having been elected to the PCL's Management Committee and joined the Nursery Volunteer Team. By volunteering in the nursery Grant will increase the opportunities to learn about the native plants on his property. The vegetation on his place will be a source of seeds, including from the Leichhardt Tree (pictured), for the nursery to grow plants for his and other properties in our region.



Note: Wildlife Friendly Fencing has the top strand in plain wire, rather than barbed wire. For more information contact PCL office.

Image: S&A Pearson

Mackay Whitsunday Soil Health Symposium

The inaugural Mackay Whitsunday Soil Health Symposium was held at the MECC on December 4. The Symposium provided various industry and community stakeholders with information on the latest research being undertaken on our region and in our neighbouring tropical catchments and to bring together renowned experts to share their knowledge and experiences. An outline of the keynote speakers and their presentations are as follows:

Rodger Savory discussed healthy soil and how it supports civilisation. He focussed on the importance of soils for civilisation; looking at how soils function within the greater whole and how society, culture and economics are all dependant on healthy soils. The implication of soil degradation on society was highlighted, examining current practices that contribute to degradation in the face of increased production pressure.

Simon Mattsson outlined how soil health is both a local issue and a global conundrum, looking at the issue from numerous viewpoints. He talked about the soil health challenges of industry in the Mackay region that require a unique approach because of crop and environment, which included compaction, loss of carbon and lack of calcium.

Joe Muscat discussed the many uses of fibre crops and the multiple benefits provided to agricultural systems that he learnt about as part of his Nuffield scholarship. His presentation covered what he learnt about farming systems, particularly the Amusa system from Sao Martinho province in Brazil. This integrated system has formed the basis for his Nuffield trial, which is co-supported through the Reef Catchments Sustainable Agriculture program.

Christopher Cameron presented an outline of the state of Australian soils, including the evolution of healthy and sustainable productive soil and why most of Australia's soils are lacking in these areas. He highlighted the largely ignored but essential element of Soil Biology in the building and maintenance of healthy soils and the place of Carbon as an essential building block in this process. Chris also shared his passion for compost and demonstrated how the use of compost can improve soil health and contribute towards increased production yields.

Kym Kruse provided an overview and practical demonstration of soil chromatography. Kym also outlined the principles and benefits of on-farm biofertiliser production and methods, which he was trained and mentored in by Latin American organisation, MasHumus.

Following on from the Soil Health Symposium, a field day visiting some of the trial sites outlined in the symposium case study booklet will be co-ordinated in early 2015. Kym Kruse from RegenAG® will also be hosting a workshop on sugarcane, grazing and horticultural practices in the New Year. Details of the field day and RegenAG® workshop will be published in the Landcare Newsletter and on the Reef Catchment website.

Landcare on Bakers Creek

Walkerston resident Daryl Barnes looks after a 50 metre section of Bakers Creek adjacent to his property. Daryl said the task of removing Singapore Daisy was a mission in itself (over a 2 year period), but trying to establish replacement vegetation (120 *Lomandra hystrix* and 20 Australian Vetiver Grass (*Chrysopgan filipes*) has become another mission. Fluctuating weather conditions are expected, but an unexpected challenge was overcoming the habits of the resident male 'scratching' Brush Turkey. A special guard was made and staked flat around each plant to guarantee it wouldn't be dug out by the turkey, who regularly works a large mound close by.



Now Daryl is waiting for really good soaking rain... and aren't we all? Meanwhile all the plants are doing well, as can be seen in the image.

Want to learn about natives plants to grow in your garden?

Contact 4955 1745 ichamp@mackay.net.au



December/January

Friday 13, 10 & 14 Working Bee Friends of MacKillop Wetlands 6.7.30am. Contact 4956 0346

March

Wednesday 4 PCL's Coastal Field Trip

Joel Salatin

is arguably the world's most famous family farmer, transforming his once eroded and worn out farm into a food production oasis. With direct sale marketing, he sells pastured beef, pork poultry and rabbits to more than 4000 families, 50 restaurants and 10 retail outlets, generating some \$10,000 per acre per year.

AND he is coming to Queensland in February and March next year. For tickets and more information contact **RegenAG.com**

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