



Landcare goes to Kindy

There is nothing like sharing the love for our natural environment with the next generation: it's passing on positive skills and a passion for life for the natural world.

Recently, Pioneer Catchment Landcare Project Officers Tom Crow and Hannah Murphy paid a visit to Pioneer Community Kindergarten in North Mackay.



"We planted a combination of native ground covers and flowering shrubs, bush tucker plants and larger trees and the kids all had a turn planting a tree or two," said Hannah.

PCL works with schools right across the Pioneer River catchment, helping them to achieve their environmental goals, including planting events, for the annual Schools Tree Day in July, nursery/propagation activities, larger revegetation projects, and supporting participation in events like the Great Northern Clean-Up.



PCL Project Officers Hannah Murphy (above) and Tom Crow (picture at left) recently spent time working with children in the garden at Pioneer Community Kindergarten.

Photos: Supplied

What's news?

Beaut New Ute Hits the Road: PCL has invested in an additional vehicle to accommodate the growing number of field projects and staff on the ground this year. Its first use will be with the new Reef Assist Program (RAP) Team . PCL Co-ordinator Nichole Zahra was excited to announce the purchase of an Isuzu D-MAX.

"The support in general from our funding partners has enabled us to purchase the ute to service the Reef Catchments and TMR revegetation projects. I'd also like to thank Tiffany at Mackay Isuzu, who organized a great price for us" she said.

Admin changes: PCL would like to acknowledge the contributions of the out-going Administrative Officer, Wendy Eiteneuer, who was involved with Landcare, in many and varying capacities, for almost 10 years. All of us at PCL would like to wish Wendy well in her future endeavours.

We would also like to thank Donna Bainbridge for her temporary assistance in the office over the past month. Her enthusiasm and willingness to learn will be missed.

We extend a warm welcome to Melissa Pimm the new Administration Officer. Her previous experience will be an asset to PCL as we grow into the future.

Working Bee reshuffle: On March 7, a band of volunteers and staff, pictured left, came together to reorganise the PCL office, sorting decades of resources, shifting furniture and making a more workable space for the growing team. Thanks a million for the help!



ABOVE: PCL Chairperson Sharon Dwyer , left, and Co-ordinator Nichole Zahra take the wraps off the brand new Isuzu DMAX that will support the RAP team.

BELOW: Many hands made light work at the office reshuffle working bee

Photos: PCL



Sim's Wattle , Heathland Wattle**Family: Fabaceae/Mimosaceae**

Acacia simsii is a medium shrub to 2-4m, found in coastal and near coastal areas from Papua New Guinea south into the Northern Territory, and North/Central Queensland. Sim's Wattle favours undulating terrain in open eucalypt forest, woodland and closed heath. It can form a closed scrub on disturbed ground. It grows on sandy/gravelly soils.

Leaves: Acacias feature phyllodes, rather than leaves (modified petioles, or leaf stems that function as leaves). Phyllodes narrow elliptical, 50-140mm long x 2-7mm wide, are straight to slightly curved and smooth. They feature 3-4 main longitudinal veins, with some minor veins running parallel and between. A small gland sits 0-2mm above the pulvinus (joint node), with up to five more along the dorsal margin.

Flowers: Perfumed, tiny, bright yellow, clustered together in fluffy balls on stems 5-12mm, borne in axillary sprays that may feature 25-35 heads, flushing at intervals, mainly in summer.

Fruit: Leathery, linear, smooth pods up to 80mm long x 4-5mm wide, flat but raised over brown-black circular seeds 2.5-4mm.



Information sourced online from: *Atlas of Living Australia* bie.ala.org.au/species/https://id.biodiversity.org.au/node/apni/2889710#overview; *Native Plants Queensland-Townsville* www.npqtownsville.org.au/native-plants-of-the-townsville-region/acacia-simsii/; *James Cook University* www.jcu.edu.au/discover-nature-at-jcu/plants/plants-by-scientific-name2/acacia-simsii/; Photo: Kirili Lamb

Pest Spotting***Salvinia molesta*****Salvinia; Giant Salvinia****Family: Salviniaceae**

A native of South America, this free-floating aquatic fern quickly forms thick mats in slow moving waterways and ponds, reducing water flow degrading water quality, and depleting oxygen. An infestation creates a breeding site for mosquitoes, and high transpiration rates can quadruple evaporative losses. Introduced from Central America, *Salvinia* is a category 3 restricted invasive plant and so should not be given away, sold or released into the environment; sightings should be notified to Biosecurity Queensland within 24 hours.

Stems: Submerged mature stems bear nets of long fibrous roots.

Leaves: In overlapping whorls of three - two light-green and floating; one submerged finely divided, long and fibrous, functions as roots. Surface covered in long, thick, water repellent hairs. Immature leaves oval about 12mm across, mature leaves compacted, folded at midrib, about 35mm long.

Reproduction: Prolific and rapid from broken off stem fragments. Ferns don't produce flowers or fruit. Small hairy spore capsules are borne on the underside of submerged leaves, but are considered to be sterile.

Spread By: People emptying aquariums and ponds into waterways. Favouring warm temperatures and higher water nutrient levels, it can double its volume every 2-3 days. Removal means primarily by biocontrol via *Salvinia* Weevil, herbicide or mechanical, but it can survive out of water for long periods.



Information sourced from Queensland Government, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries '*Salvinia* spp.' fact sheet; Images sourced from Queensland Government/DAF at www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/land-management/health-pests-weeds-diseases/weeds-diseases/invasive-plants/restricted/salvinia.

Streamlines: bringing in the birds

Much of the Pioneer Catchments' creek and river banks are under the stewardship of private landholders and present a fantastic opportunity to regenerate habitat and food for the region's riparian birds.

Rivers of Carbon have developed the short guide *How to attract more native birds to your riparian real estate*, an easy guide to assist landholders to understand how to identify which bird species use local riparian systems and to design riparian zones to meet those bird species' needs for foraging, nesting and safety.

According to a 2018 CSIRO paper, to create vegetation corridors that counter erosion risk, Best Management Practice suggests a minimum 5m corridor from the bank crest, increasing depending on the steepness and height of bank, and adjacent land use. To properly support wildlife, a corridor of at least 25m was preferable. Connected mosaic blocks were an option where the desired width was not practical for the full stream bank.

Sources: riversofcarbon.org.au/guide-how-to-attract-more-native-birds-to-your-riparian-real-estate; CSIRO/ Tropical Water Quality Hub "Optimising the management of riparian zones to improve the health of the Great Barrier Reef" 2018; Birdlife Australia (birdlife.org.au); aussiecreatures.net.

Spotlight: Red-backed Fairy Wren (*Malurus melanocephalous*)

The Red-backed Fairy Wren is a grassland species also found foraging in riparian vegetation, including forested areas with dense understorey/grassy ground-cover. The species can be found across tropical northern and eastern Australia, and into the Queensland/ NSW sub-tropics. Generally found in small family groups, they feed on small insects and other arthropods among tall grasses and shrubs, sometimes in trees. Their small dome-shaped nest is well-hidden and placed close to the ground, often in grass tussocks. The pictured male in breeding season plumage is the showier gender, with females plain brown with a pink bill and a longer, more pointed tail; non-breeding males and juveniles are similar to the females in appearance. *Image: Steve Dew/ aussiecreatures.net.*



Meet the Crew: Welcoming Our New Reef Assist Program Team

Pioneer Catchment Landcare welcomed a new Reef Assist Program team in March, with team leader Darrell Barba and trainee Sabrina Black taking on some of the growing number of re-veg projects the organisation is undertaking in 2021.

Darrell Barba grew up in Mackay, but has been away at Cape York for most of the past 20 years, leading resort cultural walks exploring flora and fauna in mangrove ecosystems around Bamaga. He also worked voluntarily on turtle conservation, including nest protection from predators.

"There were problems with erosion on the dunes, and I spent a lot of time planting trees, trying to slow down that erosion," Darrell said.

"Another thing I did was protect turtle eggs from feral pigs and goannas. I had a camp, probably the northernmost in Australia. I'd carefully collect the eggs, bring them home, put a cage over them to keep them safe, then let them go in the ocean, off on their own. I have a great love for that sort of stuff."

He completed a Deakin University Associate Diploma in Natural Resource Management in 2010 and has also studied Introduction to Biology as a pathway into a Bachelor degree.

Darrell said he was happy to start work at PCL, which has also brought him closer to his family.

"I want to be a part of natural resource management, and gain some more experience," he said.

A carpenter by trade, Darrell is completing a Cert IV in building, so that he can complete a home renovation project with life partner Samantha Edwards, a teacher.

Next edition, we will meet trainee Sabrina Black.



Photo: Kirili Lamb

Upcoming Events

April

Thur 1 - Native Plants Queensland meeting 7:30pm at Mackay Arts Society Building, Snow Wright Court Andergrove

Tue 6 - PCL Volunteering in the display garden. 8am to 12pm.

Fri 9 - PCL Slade Point Guided walk: 9-10.30am RSVP by April 5 at www.trybooking.com/BPRTTP

Sat 10 - Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve working bee/lunch

Sat 10 - Mackay Community Garden Abundance Day from 10am

Sat 10 - Birdlife Mackay outing- Tedlands, Koumala. Meet Tourist Info Centre Nebo Rd 6am, ph. 0407143823

Sun 11 - CVA/Reef Catchments Harbour Beach Community Event: Clean-up, stalls, food. See www.eventbrite.com.au/e/cap-launch-and-national-day-of-action-tickets-144959374391

Tue 13 - PCL Volunteering. 8am to 12pm.

Fri 16 & Sat 17 - MRC Click & Collect Free Plant Giveaway. See www.mackay.qld.gov.au/environment

Sat 17 - Coastcare Children's event at Harbour Beach: 8-10am

Tue 20 - PCL Volunteering at Far Beach. 8am to 12pm.

Thu 22 - Birdlife Mackay outing- De Moleyns Lagoon: meet Tourist Info Centre Nebo Road, 6:30am, ph 0407143823

Thu 22 & Fri 23 Reef Catchments Grazing Forum

Tue 27 - PCL Volunteering. 8am to 12pm.

Wed 28 - PCL stall at the Greater Whitsunday Farmers Market

Thu 29 - Coast care Weed Management Event: 8-10am, Far Beach

May

Tue 4 - PCL Volunteering in the display garden. 8am to 12pm.

Thur 6 - Native Plants Queensland meeting 7:30pm at Mackay Arts Society Building, Snow Wright Court Andergrove.

Sat 8 - Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve working bee

Sat 8 - Birdlife Mackay Outing Mount Ossa, meet Coningsby Roadhouse, 6:30am, Contact 0407143823

Sat 8 - Mackay Community Garden Abundance Day from 10am

Tue 11 - PCL Volunteering. 8am to 12pm.

Sat 15 - Birdlife Mackay Photography Workshop Botanic Gardens 9am

Tue 18 - PCL Volunteering at Far Beach. 8am to 12pm.



PCL'S ID:
C10041933

Expo and art comp celebrating mangrove

Reef Catchments Youth Ambassadors are presenting a great chance for mangrove lovers of all ages to get their art on, with their April 30 Mangrove Expo and art competition. Works responding to mangrove ecosystems in drawing, painting, sculpture, writing and photography are invited to enter primary, secondary, or 18+ sections, with a great prize pool. Find out more: <https://www.facebook.com/events/266293478228685>

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. Management Committee

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Deputy Chair | Dianne Williams

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April 2021

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