



### Reef Assist Program Conservation in Action Showcase

Reef Assist Program (RAP) stakeholders from across Greater Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac took a bus tour on July 14, visiting a showcase of revegetation and weed control program sites.

The region's RAP program is delivered by Reef Catchments in partnership with Pioneer Catchment Landcare, Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association and Whitsunday Catchment Landcare.

RAP teams work with landholders to control weeds and plant native species. Properties are prioritised in order to have the most impact on restoration of riparian zones, wildlife corridors and at-risk ecosystems.

The Reef Assist Program Conservation In Action Showcase highlighted the wide range of conservation works and training carried out by Reef Catchments and the Landcare groups across the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday region, through funding received from the Queensland Government's Reef Assist Program.

The showcase was attended by the Reef Assist teams, Landcare staff and Management Committee members, representatives from the State Government Reef Partnerships program and Reef Catchments staff.

Representing PCL were our RAP team Darrell Barba and Sabrina Black, and PCL Chairperson Sharon Dwyer.

"PCL is proud to be partnered with Reef Catchments to deliver activities in the Reef Assist Programme," Ms Dwyer said.

"It was a privilege to join the RAP bus tour to observe some of the projects being performed in our region. The tour gave valuable insight into how local residents take ownership of areas when weed control and revegetation programs are implemented. By breaking projects into smaller, longer-term activities, the sense of pride in achievement and visual impact of work performed can be maximised."



Reef Assist Program showcased.

Photos: (top) Saskia von Fahland, SCLMA;  
(bottom) A. Bown, Reef Catchments



2020: Some of the keen cleaner-uppers who stepped up for the Great Northern Clean-Up Riverside Drive event held last September, with PCL project officer Tom Crow (right).  
Photo: PCL

### Get Set for Great Northern Clean-Up

The Great Northern Clean-Up is once again ready to roll this month, with Pioneer Catchment Landcare once again joining with Conservation Volunteers Australia and Mackay Regional Council to tackle a perennial littering along the northern bank of our beautiful blue-water river: Riverside Drive, Cremorne.

The clean up will kick off from 9:30am on Sunday, August 29.

The event joins an array of clean-up events around the catchment; keep an eye on the clean-up web page for more info.

All gloves, bags, litter pickers, hand sanitiser etc. will be provided, but a must have for participants is closed in shoes, sun-safe clothes, wide-brimmed hat and a water bottle, and Under 14s need to be accompanied by an adult.

Sign up or donate at [www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/fundraisers/carolinehood/riverside-drive](http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/fundraisers/carolinehood/riverside-drive)



Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2021 - Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021

## Australian Lemon Grass; Scented Oil Grass

Family: Poaceae

Australian Lemon Grass (*Cymbopogon ambiguus*) is a heat, frost and drought-hardy perennial native grass with a sweet strong citrus aroma. It is common across most areas of Australia, except cold temperate and occurs up to 900m above sea level. It typically grows at forest edge zones, including rainforest, eucalypt forest, within wooded grasslands and vine thickets.

**Leaves:** Grows in dense clumps (caespitose) up to 1.5m high, but typically to 1m. Lower leaves have a persistent long sheath, prominently veined with fine to no hairs. Green to blue-green blade is folded, and less than 4mm wide with fine, whitish (glaucous) coating.

**Flowers & Seeds:** Several longer flowering stems hold flowering clusters (racemes) along one-third of their length (15-25mm), enclosed in a spathe (sheath) when immature, opening to reveal densely haired spikelets 6-7mm, with small, orange-brown seeds.

**Growing:** *Cymbopogon ambiguus* needs a sunny position and will tolerate very dry conditions when established. Propagation is by division of clumps or from seed. Lemon grass can be grown in any soil and tolerates regular cutting. **Uses:** Makes a pleasant tasting aromatic tea, and has been used as a steam inhalation and tea for colds, and topically for sores, by First Nations cultures.

**Sources:** Australian National Botanic Gardens Centre for Australian National Biodiversity Research: *Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants Edition 7* [www.canbr.gov.au/cpbr/cd-keys/RFK7/key/RFK7/Media/Html/entities/Cymbopogon\\_ambiguus.htm](http://www.canbr.gov.au/cpbr/cd-keys/RFK7/key/RFK7/Media/Html/entities/Cymbopogon_ambiguus.htm) ; Cape York NRM [capeyorknrm.com.au/landmanager/biodiversity/grasses/mitchell-river-fan-aggregation/cymbopogon-ambiguus](http://capeyorknrm.com.au/landmanager/biodiversity/grasses/mitchell-river-fan-aggregation/cymbopogon-ambiguus) ; Atlas of Living Australia [bie.ala.org.au](http://bie.ala.org.au) ; [tuckerbush.com.au/native-lemongrass-cymbopogon-ambiguus/](http://tuckerbush.com.au/native-lemongrass-cymbopogon-ambiguus/).



Photos: Kirili Lamb, PCL

## Pest Spotting

## *Vachellia nilotica* subsp. *indica*

### Prickly Acacia

Family: Mimosaceae

Dryland weed Prickly Acacia is occasionally found in localised areas of the southern part of the Mackay region. Identified here in a 2018 DAF survey, the small thorny tree can grow to 5-10m (although generally at the lower end of that range in this region). It is adapted to the conditions that occur in most areas of Queensland, including areas to the south and north of the Mackay region, in Bowen and Rockhampton. Initially introduced as a shade and fodder tree for the cattle industry, the Indian exotic legume has since become a Weed of National Significance. It has a propensity to form thickets and can infest waterways, compromising biodiversity.

**Leaves and stems:** Prickly Acacia's leaves are fern-like, with 4-10 pairs of leaf branches, each bearing 10-20 pairs of narrow green leaflets. Thorns are paired, stout, generally around 1-5cm long, and bark on saplings has a tinge of orange and/or green, older trees have dark, rough bark and develop an umbrella shaped canopy, with fewer thorns.

**Flowers:** Occur in late February and are golden-yellow, ball-shaped, growing on stems from leaf joints with 2-6 flowers per group. **Fruit:** Seed pods are flat, 10-15cm, with narrow constrictions between seeds, greyish when ripe (October to January). A medium sized tree can produce 175,000 seeds annually, remaining viable in soil for upwards of seven years.



Photos: Queensland Government

**Sources:** *Queensland Government DAF Fact Sheet*; *DAF 2018 Prickly Acacia Distribution map Mackay Regional Council*: [www.mackay.qld.gov.au/environment/natural\\_environment/animals\\_and\\_plants/plants\\_of\\_the\\_region](http://www.mackay.qld.gov.au/environment/natural_environment/animals_and_plants/plants_of_the_region)



### Rodenticide risks: keep it friendly for native wildlife

Introduced rats (*Rattus rattus*) and mice (*Mus musculus*) present challenges for landholders of all types, but use of some rodenticides presents an unintended threat not only to native rodents, but their predators, such as raptor species like eagles, and owls.

Because introduced rodents can impact crops, and fodder storage, they have heavily impacted the agricultural sector, while in more urban settings there have been public health implications. While mechanical and lower impact chemical controls had some effect, the introduction of anti-coagulants like Warfarin and Coumatetralyl in the 1950s exercised a real impact on rodent populations. Fast forward to the 1970s and 80s, and concerns around resistance to these led to the development of “second generation anti-coagulant rodenticides” (SGAR). SGAR active constituents include Brodifacoum, Bromadiolone, Difenacoum, Difethialone and Flocoumafen (the latter two are used only by professional pest controllers).



The Pale Field Rat (*Rattus tunneyi*) is a native rodent of this region. Photo: Queensland Museum

These SGARs contain more potent compounds that not only kill animals that consume the bait, but radiate along the food chain to impact predator species through secondary poisoning, persisting within tissues and organs for months to years. A 2018 study of declining populations of Southern Boobook Owls (*Ninox boobook*) in Western Australia showed anti-coagulants were found in livers of 72.6% of deceased owls tested, including fledglings. Higher figures have been recorded in UK barn owls and kestrels. While the US, Canada and EU have banned general public use of SGARs, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, following public consultation in 2020, has determined to address only labelling issues, and remain in retail.

**Sources:** [owlfriendly.org.au/rodent-control/](http://owlfriendly.org.au/rodent-control/) ; [birdlife.org.au/rodent-control/](http://birdlife.org.au/rodent-control/) ; [www.lfwseq.org.au/pest-rodent-control-without-harming-owls/](http://www.lfwseq.org.au/pest-rodent-control-without-harming-owls/) ; [apvma.gov.au/node/78756](http://apvma.gov.au/node/78756) ; Lohr, M.T (2018) Anticoagulant rodenticide exposure in an Australian predatory bird increases with proximity to developed habitat. *Science of the Total Environment* 643: 134-144.



LOCAL PREDATOR: Powerful Owl.  
Photo: Birdlife Australia

## Gardens for Wildlife Re-Wilding Our Suburban Garden—Part 1

By Jenny White, PCL member and regular volunteer



Early Plantings with Mulch and Pebble Paths. Photos: Jenny White



I'm passionate about our natural world and all that's in it, including people. How, in our everyday lives, can we connect with the incredible pleasure to be found in nature and in turn allow nature and all that's in it to be part of our lives?

The primary aim of my husband John and I was to re-wild our garden, creating a habitat that would provide food, shelter and a home for a diversity of wildlife. Except for a small vegie bed, our 800m<sup>2</sup> block was devoid of any meaningful life.

Starting in July 2019, we brought in 70m<sup>3</sup> of forest mulch to provide a 150mm base that would kill off the weeds, break down over time to create soil and produce a nutrient base for the plants. The soil below is sand: our block had been denuded of sand dunes and their ecosystem for development.

For the paths, black plastic mat was topped with smallish pebbles. They were “soft” paths that could be easily changed.

The Slade Point Nature Reserve out back gave us a wonderful borrowed space for our overall garden view.

In turn, our garden would grow to provide the wildlife out back with another space to inhabit, forage, feed and breed in.

## Upcoming Events

### August

**Sun 1** - National Tree Day

**Sun 1** - Birdlife Mackay Outing: Berri Werri Ck, Gargett. Meet: Tourist Info Centre Nebo Road 6:30am. Ph: 0407143823

**Tue 3** - PCL Volunteering in the display garden. 8am to 12pm.

**Thu 5** - Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) meeting 7:30pm at Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens meeting room

**Sat 7**— Reef Catchments Litter Trap Audit, Slade Point Community Gardens 9-11.30am. Visit [www.eventbrite.com.au/e/gross-pollutant-trap-audit-tickets-163594370165](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/gross-pollutant-trap-audit-tickets-163594370165)

**Tue 10** - PCL Volunteering— Lamberts Lookout. 8am to 12pm.

**Sat 14**-Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve working bee 8-10am

**Sat 14** - Mackay Community Garden Abundance Day, 10am

**Sat 14** - Birdlife Mackay General Meeting Botanic Gardens Conference Room 9:30am 0418776594

**Tue 17** - PCL Volunteering at Far Beach. 8am to 12pm.

**Sun 19** - Birdlife Mackay Outing: Blacks Beach Cove. Ph: 0407143823

**Tue 24** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery. 8am to 12pm.

**Fri 27** - Birdlife Mackay- Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Survey On the Deck 6:30am Ph:0411887546

**Tue 31** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery. 8am to 12pm.

### September

**Thu 2** - Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) meeting 7:30pm at Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens meeting room

**Sat 4** - Reef Catchments Tilapia Takedown, 8.30-11am, Gooseponds North Mackay. Info: [reefcatchments.com.au/events](http://reefcatchments.com.au/events)

**Sat 4** - Birdlife Mackay Outing: Padaminka, meet Tourist info Centre, Nebo Rd. Ph: 0407143823

**Tue 7** - PCL Volunteering in the display garden. 8am to 12pm.

**Sat 11**-Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve working bee 8-10am

**13-17** - Birdlife Mackay Eungella Bird Week Ph: 0407143823

**Tue 14** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery. 8am to 12pm.

**Sat 14** - Mackay Community Garden Abundance Day, 10am

**Tue 21** - PCL Volunteering at Far Beach. 8am to 12pm.



**PCL'S ID:**  
**C10041933**

### VOLUNTEERING AT PCL

*Every Tuesday, a happy band of volunteers come together for a range of activities that help make Landcare tick, whether it's down re-veg planting by the sea at Far Beach, developing our lovely display garden, or talking plants and life while working at the nursery propagation tables at Mackay Natural Environment Centre. Come join us! To get involved, contact Project Officer Tom Crow at [projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au)*

### Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. Management Committee

#### Executive

**Chair** | Sharon Dwyer

**Deputy Chair** | Dianne Williams

**Secretary** | Fran Mann

**Treasurer** | Nancy Pratt

#### Committee Members

Dave Hunter

Judith Wake

### Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. Office contacts:

**Phone** | 07 4944 1979

**Email** | [admin@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:admin@pioneercatchment.org.au)

**Website** | [www.pioneercatchment.org.au](http://www.pioneercatchment.org.au)

#### Coordinator |

[coordinator@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:coordinator@pioneercatchment.org.au)

Matt Birch | **Acting Project Officer** | 0497 006 606  
[projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au)

Tahnee Hamill | **Administration Officer** |  
[admin@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:admin@pioneercatchment.org.au)

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