

New and Improved Wildlife Safe Haven at PCL

Take a walk through our recently upgraded Gardens for Wildlife Display Garden and see what you can discover! Spot a bee or frog hotel, lizard lounge or simply sit down on our new garden seating and enjoy the serenity of the garden. This display garden, supported by the Mackay Regional Council, was designed specifically for the community to come and learn about planting natives in your garden that provide habitat for native wildlife.

We would like to say thank you to the volunteers who have attended the planting days with the Pioneer Catchment team. Your hard work and continued support is appreciated, and we could not have done it without you. The team planted over 100 tube stock, supplied by Mackay Natural Environment Centre, and bright flowering species were selected to target local pollinators including Yellow Buttons (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*) and Everlasting Daisies (*Xerochrysum bracteatum*).

To diversify the garden, we planted Musk Scented Plant (*Hypoestes floribunda*) as it is a larval food plant of the Blue Argus Butterfly, Native Lasiandra (*Melastoma malabathricum subsp. malabathricum*) as it is a host plant of the Wattle Blue Butterfly, Crinum Lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*) as it is bee attracting and a host to the Lily Caterpillar Moth and more. A full interactive list of plant species growing in our garden will soon be available for viewing on our website but in the meantime you can also scan the QR Codes located on our garden plant labels for quick access to the species fact sheets.

Feeding two birds with one seed, the field team took the opportunity to get creative for the garden edging. A landholder required some bamboo to be cut back, and as requested we took to task. The removed bamboo was repurposed into garden edging. It was also then split and cut to size to be used to secure the edging to the garden, eliminating having to purchase further materials.

A bird bath for our local Magpie and an outdoor bench to sit on and admire the lovely new garden, were both kindly donated by Bunnings Community Program. We would also like to say thank you to Mackay Regional Council and the team at Mackay Natural Environment Centre for their contributions to this project.



Photos by PCL Project Officer at PCL Display Garden (Gardens For Wildlife).

OUR VISION:

To empower our community to build biodiverse ecosystems

OUR MISSION:

To implement an integrated, science-based approach to natural resource management through supportive partnerships across our catchment.

VALUES:

- ◉ *We are innovative, and driven by action at a grassroots level* ◉
- ◉ *Ethical* ◉ *Engaged* ◉ *Passionate* ◉

Queensland Blue Gum

Family: Myrtaceae

If you come from south of the Queensland border, you may know this as a Red Gum. Red or Blue, this is a most stately tree, typifying the Australian Gum Tree. It is a large tree with a straight trunk up to half of the tree height and a moderately dense crown. The large branches are typically steeply ascending. Bark is smooth, white, grey or bluish and sheds in irregular plates. This iconic tree is useful as a food source for koalas, timber, resins, honey and medicinal purposes. It is also fast growing and is an important source of pollen and nectar during winter while many other trees are not in bloom.

Leaves: Long narrow up to 20 x 2.5cm, mid-green on both sides.

Flowers/Fruits: The buds, which have an elongated, conical or horn-shaped bud cap, are borne in groups amongst the foliage. White or sometimes pink flowers occur between April and October and are followed by almost globular fruit up to 6 x 8mm, with 4 or 5 strongly protruding valves.

Propagation: From January to March, collect fruit and place in paper bags in a warm position. Capsules will open releasing seed, then place into a shaker for easy coverage of soil medium.

Local Habitat: Common in central Queensland, mainly on lower hillslopes and alluvial flats.

Distribution: Widespread from eastern Vic. to north of Cooktown and in Papua New Guinea.

Growing notes: Suited to full sun, well drained fertile soil, drought tolerant once established but prefers moisture. Great for planting along waterways.

Sources: *Eucalyptus tereticornis* subsp. *tereticornis*: Centre for Australian National Biodiversity Research (CANBR), 2020. **Photos:** Queensland Native Seeds



Pest Spotting

Leucaena leucocephala

Leucaena

Family: Mimosaceae

Leucaena leucocephala is a large shrub/medium tree, originally from Central America. In our tropical coastal area, *Leucaena* has become a significant weed, invading creek banks, roadsides, mangrove margins, beach scrubs and even into rainforest margins. Experts advise that while the subspecies *leucocephala* is predominant, some other subspecies can be identified in our area.

L. leucocephala subsp. *glabrata* is widely grown for cattle fodder in drier areas west of the range. In these areas, it is grown under guidelines in a voluntary management agreement which is designed to prevent spread out of the managed pastures. Once you recognise *Leucaena*, you will appreciate from the extent of the infestation around Mackay, that the impact of this species is severe. Its seeds are viable for 20 years, so we have a real challenge ahead.

Flowers: Small, numerous creamy-yellow in fluffy balls 18-20mm in diameter, borne in terminal and axillary sprays.

Fruit: 100s of dark brown flat pods to 12cm.

Seeds: 8-24, glossy brown, 5-9mm long, long lived, highly viable.

Spread by: Wind-borne pods, water, garden waste and contaminated soil.

Control: Small individual plants may be manually removed, taking care to remove the roots. Controlled grazing before it grows out of the reach of cattle controls it. On larger specimens or infestations, application of specific herbicides may be more appropriate.

PCL has recently begun leucaena works at the Seaforth boat ramp in a project supported by Mackay Regional Council. Using a range of targeted control methods, we hope to prevent the spread of leucaena into local mangrove populations as well as monitor regrowth and in turn contribute to improving water quality in the region.

Sources: *Leucaena*: The State of Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, 2020. **Photos:** Brisbane City Council



Fire Ants: One of the World's Most Invasive Pests

Invasive fire ants (*Solenopsis invicta*) pose a real and current threat with the potential to spread all over the country and cause significant environmental, economic and social impacts. An increase in sightings following heavy rain and flooding in South East Queensland has highlighted the need for landholders and businesses to be on high alert, particularly when moving organic material that may carry fire ant nests to new areas.



Fire ants were first identified in Brisbane in 2001, although it is predicted that they may have been present for up to 20 years before discovery and may have been transported to Australia via cargo shipped from overseas. As most of Australia's climate is the perfect conditions for fire ants, experts believe that there is the potential for this invasive species to spread through Australia's east coast as far as Tropical North Queensland causing immense damage to remnant ecosystems, wildlife populations, agriculture, recreational spaces, homes and businesses, as well as posing a significant human health risk.

According to the National Fire Ant Eradication Program, there are a few notable characteristics that will help you to identify fire ants. These include:

- copper brown in colour with a darker abdomen
- quite small at 2 – 6 mm
- found in a variety of sizes within the one nest.



When checking suspicious ant nests, gently poke the nest with a long stick and observe the ants that come out. Be careful not to get too close, as fire ants are aggressive. They swarm when disturbed and have a painful sting.

If you have identified fire ants on your property, it is important to report your sighting to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) via the National Fire Ant Eradication Program website at www.fireants.org.au. On this website you can also find helpful information about fire ant identification, biosecurity zones and advice on the movement of organic material. It is imperative that the presence of fire ants is reported as soon as possible in order to prevent further spread of fire ant colonies throughout Queensland.

Sources: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, National Fire Ant Eradication Program, 2022.

Historic Crowd for Community Fingerling Release Day

The Mackay Area Fish Stocking Association (MAFSA) has had a busy couple of months restocking our local dams and Pioneer Catchment Landcare's Coordinator, Nancy Pratt was there along with many community members to lend a hand.



With an enormous crowd of onlookers and over 25 boats to assist, Saturday 15th January saw MAFSA release 18,000 Barramundi fingerlings into Kinchant Dam under the Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme. The fingerlings were supplied from Good Fortune Bay hatchery at Bowen. The fish were very healthy and around 100mm in length and will reach around 580mm within 18 months. The fantastic number of community members to help release the fingerlings around the dam's protective edges was the best turn out the organisation has witnessed in its history.

On 19th February MAFSA released 60,000 Sooty Grunter fingerlings into Eungella Dam. The fish were purchased from Redgate Fish

Farm and transported up to Eungella Dam. There were plenty of families with and without boats, ready to help distribute the fingerlings in various locations around the dam. The Sooty will grow to 65cm and are renowned for their hard fighting. MAFSA also hosts the INDT 17th World Sooty Championship at Eungella Dam on April 30th – May 31st. Nominations are open and all are welcome to join in.

MAFSA is a not-for-profit organisation and is recognised as one of the best hatcheries in Australia. A group of dedicated volunteers run the operation at the Rob Symons Hatchery, located in Rural View. With the equipment and expertise the hatchery has to date, they are able to spawn and grow out fish to restock our fresh water habitats.



Upcoming Local Community Events

April

Fri 1 - MNEC Free Plant Giveaway 9am to 3pm, Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Guided Walks in the Gardens 10am to 11am

Sat 2 - MNEC Free Plant Giveaway 9am to 12pm

Tue 5 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm

Fri 8 - Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Guided Walks in the Gardens 10am to 11am

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

Wed 13 - Mackay Community Gardens Kids Activities, Planting Bee & Shared Feast 10am

Tue 19 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm

Fri 22 - Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Guided Walks in the Gardens 10am to 11am

Tue 26 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm

Thurs 28 - PCL Special General Meeting 4pm to 5:30pm at MNEC

Fri 29 - Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Guided Walks in the Gardens 10am to 11am

May

Tue 3 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm, and Lamberts Beach Lookout

Fri 6 - Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Guided Walks in the Gardens 10am to 11am

Tue 10 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm

Fri 13 - Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Guided Walks in the Gardens 10am to 11am

Tue 17 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm, and Lamberts Beach Lookout

Fri 20 - Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Guided Walks in the Gardens 10am to 11am

Tue 24 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm, and Far Beach

Fri 27 - Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Guided Walks in the Gardens 10am to 11am

Tue 31 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm, and Lamberts Beach Lookout



PCL'S ID:
C10041933

COVID SHIFTS VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Keen to volunteer with PCL? We are looking for new volunteers keen to get involved in Landcare planting activities, at beautiful locations like Far Beach and Lamberts Headland. Come join us! Contact projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au for more information.

Due to Mackay Natural Environment Centre COVID policy, there has been a temporary suspension on NEW volunteers for propagating activities at the MNEC nursery. Existing volunteers are still welcome.

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc.

Executive

Chair | Sharon Dwyer

Deputy Chair | Judith Wake

Secretary | Fran Mann

Treasurer | Claire Stribbles

Committee Members

Earl Neilsen

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. Office contacts:

Phone | 07 4944 1979

Email | admin@pioneercatchment.org.au

Website | www.pioneercatchment.org.au

Coordinator | Nancy Pratt
coordinator@pioneercatchment.org.au

Project Officer | Tahnee Hamill
projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au

Administration Officer | admin@pioneercatchment.org.au

Newsletter | communications@pioneercatchment.org.au

Meet our Board Members

Fran Mann — Secretary

Fran Mann is a second-term councillor with Mackay Regional Council and has lived in our region for most of her life. She grew up in the Pioneer Valley and attended school at Pinnacle State School and Mirani State High School. Her parents built and operated a service station near Finch Hatton, which also provided services to the agricultural industry.

Fran has had experience in a diverse range of industries including real estate sales and rentals and retail, as well as working for Mackay Regional Council for 9.5 years prior to being elected to council. Fran actively participates with many groups including the Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve, which is a natural environment reserve located in Andergrove. The group is committed to assisting council to preserve the reserve in its natural state for the benefit and enjoyment of all residents. The group conducts regular working bees which assist with rubbish removal and removing pest plant species.

Other groups that Fran is passionate about, and holds positions with, are The Trudy Crowley Foundation, Mackay Women's Services, Youth Information Referral Service, Mackay Fire Special Olympics, Zonta International, Mackay Regional Housing Company and Better Together Housing.

While taking on the secretary role with Pioneer Catchment & Landcare is very different from other volunteer roles Fran holds, she is thoroughly enjoying learning more about PCL, and the important work that they complete around the region.



Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. Proudly supported by:

