

# Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

May 2022

Kids Buzzing over Nature Crafts  
at Mackay Regional Council's  
Free Plant Giveaway Day

**New!**

**PCE Mail**  
Community Questions  
and Insights!



Native plant of the  
month - Beach Vitex



Swap exotic house  
plants for natives



Meet our Board  
Members - Judith Wake



## *Our Mission*

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



## Kids buzzing over nature crafts at MRC's Free Plant Giveaway Day

On the 1st - 2nd April 2022, Mackay Regional Council held their Free Plant Giveaway at the Mackay Natural Environment Centre on Swayne Street, North Mackay. This is an opportunity for Mackay ratepayers to claim their 4 free native plants per year through MRC's Free Native Plant Program and for us, as Landcare, to engage with the local community.

For years past we have held a stall at this busy event and have assisted community members with Landcare advice, supported by wonderful MNEC volunteers. This time, we had some exciting additions to our stall including the MRC pest trailer to provide information about weeds and pest animals as well as nature play activities to occupy the kids while their parents browsed the beautiful array of local native plants.

Nature play is a great way to encourage children to get outdoors and learn about our beautiful natural environment in a fun, simple and inexpensive way. Over 65 children participated in nature crafts and a nature spotting activity in our Gardens for Wildlife display garden!

The event also saw incredible interest in the Land for Wildlife Program, with several new landholders signing up to the program as well as welcoming many new PCL members. Our Project Officers and Deputy Chair, Judith Wake, were there with their expertise to help landholders select plants that were suited to their specific Regional Ecosystems. Understanding your regional ecosystem is important if you are interested in restoring native vegetation



Sabrina Black and Angus Mecoles at PCL's Stall



Photos by PCL Project Officer at MRC's Free Plant Giveaway



on your property as it's best to select plants that are suited to this particular environment and the local wildlife on your property.

We would like to thank Mackay Regional Council's MNEC for including us in this incredible event, and we look forward to the next Free Plant Giveaway Day in August 2022.

### 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 •



## Beach Vitex

**Family: Lamiaceae**

*Vitex rotundifolia* is a hardy sprawling shrub around 1-1.5 metres tall that is typically found on coastal dunes above the high tide level along the Eastern and Northern Coasts of Australia. It's ability to spread across the sand, rooting at the nodes, makes it an excellent plant for beach stabilization. It can also be a great addition to your garden, particularly if you have sandy, well drained soils, with it's beautiful silvery green leaves and small bluish purple flowers that appear throughout the year. Interestingly, *Vitex rotundifolia* was one of the plants collected in Cooktown by Banks and Solander in 1770 during the voyage of the Endeavor and is now considered a pest in the United States.

**Leaves:** Small roundish leaf blades with both upper and lower surfaces of the leaf covered in pale velvety hairs .

**Flowers/Fruits:** Flowers can be 3-13 cm long, blueish purple in colour, growing in clusters throughout most of the year. Small round fruit are produced about 6 mm in diameter and bluish purple to black when ripe.

**Local Habitat:** Coastal foreshore dunes.

**Distribution:** Eastern and Northern Coasts of Australia.

**Growing Notes:** Suited to full sun, well drained soil, drought tolerant once established, insect attracting.

**Sources:** *Vitex rotundifolia*: CSIRO, 2020, Magnetic Island Plants, 2020. **Photos:** Tropical Plants Qld



## Pest Spotting

## *Centrosema molle*

### Centro

**Family: Fabaceae**

Vigorous twining climber, forming tangled mats or growing over shrubs and trees to 3m or more. Can produce large quantities of viable seed and prevents regeneration of native plants. Seeds are light and are easily spread by the wind. During the dry season, it is the best time to take control of weedy climbers like Centro that grow very quickly in the wet season. Try to also remove vine before seed pods grow, this will significantly reduce the need for future efforts.

**Leaves:** Alternate, pinnate with 3 leaflets, broadest below the mid-point, terminal leaflet lanceolate and much larger than laterals. Triangular stipules, 0.3-0.4cm.

**Flowers:** Pea-shaped, pink to mauve, 2 x 2-3cm, densely hairy on back, borne in axillary groups of one to several at the end of slender stems.

**Seeds:** Flattened, straight or curved smooth pale brown pods with thickened margins, 7 -15 x 0.7cm, contain 8-20 red-brown mottled seeds.

**Spread by:** contaminated soil, wind, vehicles, garden waste and animals.

**Control:** Hand pull the roots of the vine to kill the vine prior to seeding to prevent future seed bank.

**Distribution:** Widely naturalised in the Mackay region.



Source: MRPMG, Are Your Garden Plants Going Bush?. MRPMG, 2013. Weeds of the Mackay Whitsunday Region. Photos: M Spalding



### Calen State School Bush Tucker Garden Update



Before planting (September 2021)



April 2022



Native Rosella (flowering on the left) and Coastal Boobialla (right) thriving in the garden at Calen State School

In December 2021, PCL helped Calen State School plant 50 native plants in their new bush tucker garden. These included plants with traditional uses such as Pink Lime Berry (*Glycosmis trifoliata*), Native Mint (*Mentha saturioides*), Coastal Boobialla (*Myoporum boninense subsp. Austral*), Native Lasiandra (*Melastoma affine*) and Native Rosella (*Abelmoschus moschatus subsp tuberosus*). Five months on and we have received some incredible updates on how their garden is going!

#### PCL Mail

If you have a Landcare question or insights you would like to share with us, please email us at [admin@pioneercatchment.org.au](mailto:admin@pioneercatchment.org.au) and you may be featured in our next monthly newsletter!



### Swapping your exotic house plants for natives

Although there are many exotics that make great indoor plant companions, they can still pose a threat to our natural environment if they ever find their way out the door and into your garden. Many invasive weeds in Australia were once used as ornamental garden plants that escaped into the bush, including Mother of millions (*Bryophyllum delagoense*), Cat's claw creeper (*Macfadyena unguis-cati*) and Madeira vine (*Anredera cordifolia*), and unfortunately there are even many garden escapees that are still sold in nurseries today that can cause significant environmental damage, such as *Syngonium* varieties and Mother in Laws Tongue (*Sansevieria trifasciata*).

A great alternative to exotic house plants is choosing native species that love being indoors and don't mind growing in a pot! Below are some local natives that you can get at the Mackay Natural Environment Centre (MNEC) Nursery in North Mackay.

Peperomia  
(*Peperomia blanda*)



Native Ginger  
(*Alpinia caerulea*)



Blue Umbrella  
(*Mackinlaya macrosciadea*)



Dwarf Palm Lily  
(*Cordylina murchisoniae*)



Photos: Mackay Regional Council, Australian Native Plants Online, Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

## Upcoming Local Community Events

### 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

### June

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

**Tue 14** - PCL Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm, and at Far Beach from 8:30am—12pm.

**Tue 21** - Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm.

**Tue 28** - Volunteering in the nursery 8am to 12pm, and PCL Volunteering at Far Beach from 8:30am to 12pm. .



**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](mailto: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

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## Meet our Board Members

### Judith Wake— Deputy Chair

In the role of Deputy Chair of Pioneer Catchment Landcare Management Committee (PCLMC), Judith hopes to apply the knowledge and skills she taught for many years as an academic in Applied and Environmental Science at Central Queensland University to assist with PCLs projects. Although recently retired, she maintains her connection to the university as an adjunct researcher with the Coastal Marine Ecosystem Research Centre.

Judith is also Deputy President of the Mackay Branch of Native Plants Queensland (SGAP) and is their representative on the PLCMC. She takes every opportunity to promote the growing of native plants.

Judith is also a board member of Queensland Water and Land Carers representing the Burdekin Dry Tropics/Mackay/Whitsunday regions. In this role, she aims to facilitate collaboration among the member groups.

Previously, Judith worked in the hospitality/tourism industry at Eungella where she and her family aimed to live as sustainably as possible on a small acreage, with a few cattle and a large vegetable garden. This experience provided lot of valuable lessons that are still relevant.

Judith spends her spare time trying to revegetate her peri-urban block outside of Mackay with native plants. The wallabies, possums and brush-turkeys have other ideas.



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