

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News

June 2023

Water Quality
Improvement Workshop
On Farm Water Treatment and
Drainage Systems

School Soil Talk
At St Joseph's Catholic
Primary School

MRC'S
VOLUNTEER EXPO

Plant of the Month - Pigface
Pest Spotting - Coral Creeper



Connecting Up
Conference



Chemical-free
Weeding



Our Mission

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

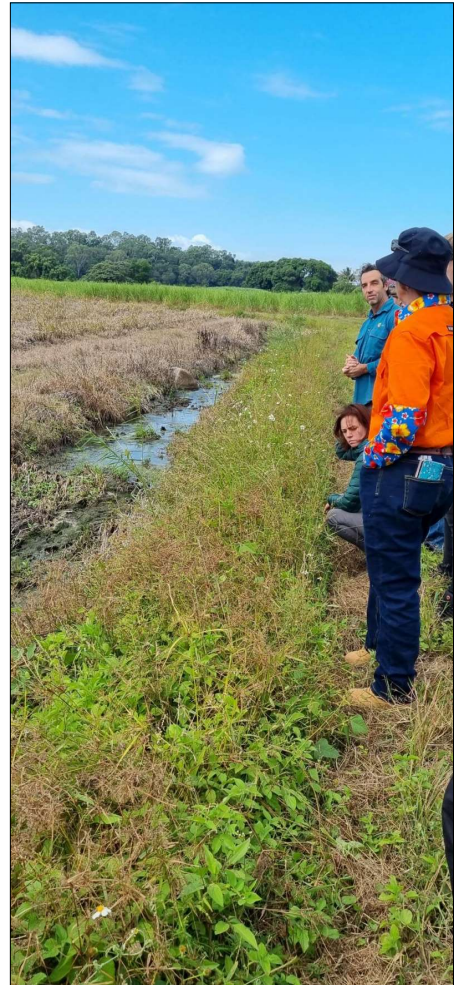
Improving Water Quality on the Farm

On Wednesday 10th May, PCL collaborated with Australian Wetland Consultancy to present ‘On farm Treatment Systems and Drainage Works: A Water Quality Improvement Workshop’, funded by the Queensland Government’s Queensland Reef Water Quality Program. The workshop was attended by 15 members of the community, eager to enhance their knowledge on improving water quality on their properties.

The first part of the workshop took place at Habana Community Precinct, presented by Damien McCann from Australian Wetland Consultancy with a Power Point presentation on drainage design. He also discussed wetland function, design and plant species that are best to use in revegetation of riparian areas.

The second half of the day was a field trip to a local cane farm to look at part of the Janes Creek treatment drain. This was rehabilitated in 2018 by Reef Catchments and Damien discussed some of the environmental benefits, challenges and importance of stakeholder engagement throughout the process.

Overall it was a good day! PCL would like to thank Damien McCann and all who attended the event.



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Soil Talk

On Friday 28th April, PCL delivered a talk and demonstration on soil texture, nutrients and pH (acidity) to 54 grade 6 students of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. Groups were split into two 45-minute sessions involving a discussion around soil textures and essential elements in the soil (nutrients) and a hands-on practical experiment involving three types of soils from different areas including a cane field (clay), a rainforest (loam with lots of organic matter) and the coast (sandy). The students followed a diagram to test the different textures commonly known as the "ribbon test" where the students tested the structure of the different soils and needed to work out where they had come from. A visual demonstration was also carried out by PCL using a Soil pH Test Kit to demonstrate the pH level of the three different soil types.

This learning activity will all tie into the vegetable garden that the students will be building in the coming months. The session was finished off with a question time, with some good questions coming in from the students, such as "what would the pH be if you mixed all the soils together" and "what if our soil for our vegetable garden isn't a good pH and how do we fix it".



PCL Officer, Danny Hudson, conducting soil talk and demonstration to St Joseph's students

Exploring Opportunities at the Volunteer Expo

PCL Chair, Sharon, attended the Volunteer Expo hosted by MRC on May 7th to both attract potential volunteers and find out what we should be offering to encourage them to volunteer with us. It was a wonderful event that saw quite a level of interest in PCL and an interesting range of information was gathered. A lot was learnt from engaging with various organisations, businesses and members of the public who showed interest in partnering or participating in PCL events.

A number of people mentioned they would like more physical work such as weeding and tree planting and there was a lot of interest in involving the community in revitalising the Pioneer River bank at Marian. There was also a significant number of people wanting to be involved in clean-up events either along the beach but more so around waterways and swimming holes in the region.

People mentioned having a more specific networking day where we talk with everyone to fine tune what people would like to do with PCL. A similar theme was to have regular (weekly or monthly) get togethers where people work followed by a more social way to connect by sitting around talking and sharing food.

People are wanting to be involved with PCL and we have potential to engage with them and provide the opportunity for them to contribute to a cause that they believe in and in a way that resonates with them.

Sharon found it an inspiring and informative way to

spend her Sunday, topped off with free bacon and eggs and coffee. She suggested we book a site for next year's event.



PCL Chair, Sharon Dwyer, at the Volunteer Expo

Natural Ways to Keep the Weeds at Bay

Although chemical weed killers can be necessary to control invasive weed infestations, there are many ways to control weed growth in your garden naturally. Chemical weed killers can negatively impact the biodiversity in your garden, so to protect the beneficial insects, microbes in your soil and other plants that may be harmed, try the following tips where appropriate:

- ◆ Stay on top of your weeding and hand pull weeds as they pop up. If you let weeds get out of hand, hand pulling can seem like a daunting task. Ensure that all the roots are extracted to reduce the risk of reshooting. Also be mindful to remove weeds before seeding occurs.
- ◆ Mulch your garden to smother weeds as they sprout. Laying down cardboard or newspaper as a biodegradable weed mat in your garden is also a great way to prevent weeds. Before planting an area of your garden, cover with sheets of repurposed cardboard, making sure to overlap so there are no gaps. Wet area down with a hose before layering with heavy mulch. It's best to wait a few months before planting so there is time for weeds to rot underneath the layers.
- ◆ Flame weeding is an effective method to kill small weeds that sprout up in the cracks in concrete pathways using a propane torch. However, this method requires extreme caution and should never be used on windy days or in fire-prone areas.
- ◆ Try some homemade weed killers such as white vinegar or boiling water. These work best on small weeds along concrete or stone pathways around the home where it will not impact other plants and you may need to apply several times to completely kill weeds. These options are safe for your family and pets, however, it's still important to take caution and not overuse vinegar in your garden as it can pollute the soil and kill insects and other plants. Also avoid spraying vinegar on wood or marble surfaces.



Sources: <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74145.html>, <https://flameengineering.com/pages/flame-weeding-101#:~:text=When%20flame%20weeding%2C%20the%20most,to%20kill%20without%20multiple%20flamings.>, <https://www.bhg.com/gardening/how-to-garden/how-to-kill-weeds-naturally/>, <https://tualatinswcd.org/sheet-mulching-made-easy/>, <https://www.bhg.com/gardening/pests/insects-diseases-weeds/vinegar-as-weed-killer/>, <https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/sheet-mulching/101512534>

The Connecting Up Conference

The Connecting Up Conference, held at the Melbourne Convention Centre and Pan Pacific Melbourne on the 10th, 11th and 12th of May was attended by PCL Officer, Taleah Virgona, who enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about the power of technology for not-for-profits. Hosted by tech company, Infoxchange, the 3-day interactive event included masterclasses, keynote presentations, panel discussions from industry leaders, and plenaries on the latest research and expertise in IT strategy, cyber security, leadership, capability building and training, digital marketing, and fundraising.

Taleah was particularly inspired by the Marketing and Social Media Masterclass with Alecia Hancock, and loved dressing up for the Awards Gala night.

In her own time, Taleah took the chance to explore the Wetlands Recovery Nursery at SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium and the Melbourne Museum, visiting the Bunjilaka Exhibition, Forest Secrets

Exhibition and Milarri Garden Trail, where she learnt about Victoria's rich cultural heritage and unique natural landscape.

Left: SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium's Wetland Recovery Nursery. Right: Conference Masterclass



Plant of the Month

Carpobrotus glaucescens

Pigface, Angular Pigface

Family: Aizoaceae

Carpobrotus glaucescens is a prostrate, creeping succulent that grows naturally along the east coast of Australia and reaches its northern limits not far from this district. (There are only two records for this district, South Kennedy, and two records just a little further north in North Kennedy.) Not to be confused with the many other species in this Genus that originate from Africa, *Carpobrotus glaucescens* with its salty fleshy leaves and berries has been used traditionally as a food source. The juice of the leaves can also be applied to relieve pain from insect bites.

Leaves: Thick, fleshy, smooth, 35-100mm by 10-15mm, triangular in cross section.

Flowers: Large, bright, pinkish-purple daisy-like with numerous shiny petals surrounding a yellow centre, mainly from October to January. Can flower sporadically throughout the year.

Fruit: Red-purple berry, more or less cylindrical, 20–30mm long and 16–24mm wide, tasting similar to salty apples.

Growing Notes: Pigface helps to stabilize sand dunes, acting as a pioneer species that lead to the enhancement of foredune vegetative communities. It is tolerant to drought and saline conditions, also withstanding strong winds, sand movement and ocean sprays. Pigface can be propagated from seed or cuttings and prefers well drained soil with full sun. It is a great, hardy selection for low maintenance gardens close to the beachfront.

Sources: <https://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2005/carpobrotus-glaucenscens.html>, <https://wetlandinfo.des.qld.gov.au/wetlands/facts-maps/wildlife/?AreaID=regional-plan-mackay-isaac-and-whitsunday&Kingdom=plants&SpeciesFilter=Native>. Images: Australian National Botanic Gardens.



Pest Spotting

Barleria Repens

Coral Creeper

Family: Acanthaceae

Barleria repens is an evergreen, creeping shrub and garden escapee that forms thick infestations and is native to Africa. Although it is not a declared weed according to the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, Coral Creeper has the potential to cause environmental harm by colonising riparian zones and forming dense thickets that displace native vegetation and prevent movement of animals. There are only three records for this district, all coastal with one escaping a garden.

Leaves and stems: Mature stems are woody, young stems are green and sparsely hairy. Stems put down roots wherever they touch the ground. Leaves are opposite, dark green and shiny with entire margins.

Flowers: Axillary, tubular with five spreading lobes, 50mm long and about 25mm wide, with two large leafy bracts at the base. Bright red to pinkish in Queensland but pink, mauve and purple flowered forms exist internationally.

Fruit: Small club-shaped capsule that splits open when mature to explosively expel four seeds a few metres from parent plant.

Spread by: Seed and vegetatively through the roots. Seeds spread a few meters via explosive release mechanism from fruit, further dispersal by water, animals and in mud. Spread through dumped garden waste and roadside slashing.

Sources: <https://weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au/weeds/coral-creeper>, <https://somemagneticislandplants.com.au/coral-creeper>. Images: Emu Park Bushcare, ALA



Upcoming Community Events

June

Thurs 1 - Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) meeting 7:30pm at Mackay Regional Botanic gardens meeting room.

Sat 3 - NPQ-SGAP Mackay Plant Sale, Mackay Regional Botanic Garden Nursery, 8:30am to 11am.

Sun 4 - Birdlife Mackay's Outing to Sandringham, meet at the Old Tourist Office on Nebo Road at 6:30am.

Tues 6 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Fri 9 - Mackay Conservation Group, World Environment Day gathering, Mackay Environment Centre, 156 Wood St, Mackay from 5pm.

Tues 13 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.
- Reef Catchments Seagrass monitoring at St Helens Beach, end of Ramp Road, 12:15pm.

Tues 20 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Tues 27 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Thurs 29 - PCL General Members Meeting (all welcome), time and location TBC

July

Tues 4 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Thurs 6 - Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch) meeting 7:30pm at Mackay Regional Botanic gardens meeting room.

Tues 11 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Tues 18 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.

Tues 25 - PCL Volunteering in the nursery, 8am to 12pm.



PCL'S ID:
C10041933

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

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

There are no longer restrictions in place for new volunteers for propagating activities at the MNEC nursery. Existing and new volunteers are welcome.

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc.

Executive

Chair | Sharon Dwyer

Deputy Chair | Judith Wake

Secretary | Fran Mann

Treasurer | Claire Stribbles

Committee Members

Earl Neilsen

Paul Tippet

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 | Danny Hudson
projectofficer@pioneercatchment.org.au

Administration and Marketing Officer | Taleah Virgona
admin@pioneercatchment.org.au

Newsletter | Hannah Murphy
communications@pioneercatchment.org.au

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 •





PIONEER
Catchment
LANDCARE

GENERAL MEETING

SAVE THE DATE

Let Your Voice Be Heard: Join Our General Meeting

**THURSDAY 29TH
JUNE**


**At our general meeting,
you'll have the
opportunity to:**

- ☒ Discuss issues that matter to you
- ☒ Share your ideas and suggestions
- ☒ Enjoy a meal on us with other like-minded members



MORE INFORMATION TO COME

 07 4944 1979

 admin@pioneercatchment.org.au