



Mooloolah River Waterwatch & Landcare Inc. T/as

Issue 45 Spring 2020

MOOLOOLAH MEANDERINGS

Welcome again to another issue of Mooloolah Meanderings. Our organisation has been quite busy over the past few months, welcoming new arrivals, new staff, kicking off new projects, ramping up plant production and planning for the upcoming busy biocontrol season. As our valued members, we welcome your input and comments on the newsletter. If there's any topics you'd like us to cover, or if you have some contributions, don't be shy! Karen, MRL Coordinator.



Sarah, partner Kyle and Zoey

Our lovely Sarah has given birth to a gorgeous and healthy baby girl, Zoey. The family are doing great. We also welcome our newest nursery assistant to the MRL family, Suzanne! Here are some words from her:

"Watching the loss of habitat on the Sunshine Coast inspired me to study Conservation & Land Management as well as plant ID and propagation.

I have a special interest in collecting coastal native seed and vegetative material. This interest led to a role setting up and running a plant nursery on K'gari (Fraser Island) with FIDO, and working at the Coolum Native Nursery. I look forward to increasing the species diversity available at MRL."



Suzanne Wilson

Plant of the Season

Our plant of the season is the drought hardy *Dianella caerulea*, commonly known as Flax Lily.

These clumping perennials look like a green grassy bush. Come the warmer months you will see sprays of little blue flowers and then some blue berries! Mixed reports on whether you can eat them or not, so perhaps play it safe and just look at these ones! They grow up to 1m high and 2m wide.



Photo by Lorna Ngugi



Photo by Lorna Ngugi

Image of Flax lily: <https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/poisonous-plant-blue-flax-lily-dianella/>

They are drought hardy, can grow in most climates, sun or shade, and are good in sandy soil - perfect for stabilising coastal areas to control erosion.

If you're after a few for your garden they are on sale now at the nursery!

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Upcoming events:

We are eagerly awaiting the time when we can offer workshops once again. In the mean time, be sure to come along to one of our "Let's go for a Walk" expeditions. Next one is coming up on Sat 10th October, location—to be determined.

We usually walk in publicly accessible natural areas, but the last trip was unique in that we were allowed to tour a gorgeous 27 acre private property of one of our members which has forest and wallum/wetland areas along with plenty of native wildlife. Thanks for having us Jan!

Bush Tucker

Here at the Mooloolah Riverwatch and Landcare, we loooove food (morning tea is our favourite time of day). We also love plants (duh!), so let's combine the two and discuss some plants you can eat!

Blue tongue... Nope, I'm not talking about the lizard—but a plant! The scientific name is *Melastoma affine* and it's a native Australian shrub that produces sweet berries that stain blue (your tongue, your hands, your clothes, so be careful!).



Blue tongue (*Melastoma affine*)

You can grow it in tropical and sub-tropical areas (perfect for us here on the coast), plant in part shade and protect it from frosts and the hot afternoon sun.

Before you get to eat the delicious berries, it will bloom short-lived large mauve flowers throughout Spring and Summer. It also has distinct red stems and leathery dark green foliage—so you're not just adding a snack to your garden, but a pretty ornamental! It can grow up to 3 m, and will attract a variety of pollen-loving creatures.

By Erin Monaghan

Just down the road

Discovering your local environment: Dularcha National Park—The Tunnel Track

Do you know about the 93m long, publicly accessible, disused railway tunnel right under our noses!

Dularcha National Park's historic railway tunnel was built in 1891. It is one of only two tunnels built along the old North Coast Line between Brisbane and Gympie.

Today this hidden gem provides a dark and suitably protected site for seasonal roosting by a variety of small bats, including Large-footed myotis, but is also accessible to the public any day of the week. While it goes without saying to our members – avoid disturbing roosting inhabitants by traversing the tunnel quietly and without bright lights.

There's a northern (from Dorson Drive, Mooloolah) and southern track (Beech Road, Landsborough) to reach the tunnel. The northern is the shorter of the two. Shared trails enable walkers, mountain bike riders and horse riders to explore the park's natural and historic features.

The walks to the tunnel traverse Eucalypt forests and riparian areas with flooded gums, cabbage tree palms and rainforest plants that provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife. Bird-

watchers will enjoy the diversity of birds along the trails early and late in the day.

Interestingly, the first section of the National Park was declared in 1921 to ensure steam train passengers would have beautiful views of Queensland's majestic forest. Luckily nearly a century later, we can still enjoy these wonderful vistas, albeit on-foot rather than aboard.

By Karen Schmidt



The tunnel entrance, photo by K. Schmidt.

Biocontrol Field Trip



When you work in a slightly obscure field such as biocontrol, it is always a pleasure to connect with other facilities doing what you do. This week a little group of ECOllaboration trainees (“the pinks”) and biocontrol volunteers went with Jessica (MRL’s biocontrol officer) on a fieldtrip to visit Gympie Landcare’s biocontrol facility. The facility has been running for around 12 years and has been managed by Yvonne for five years. They currently breed four different bioagents to help manage Cats Claw Creeper and Madeira vine; Jewel beetles, Tingid Bugs, Leaf Tying Moth and Madeira beetle.

MRL’s biocontrol facility breeds Jewel Beetles and Madeira Beetles so we were keen to compare breeding set ups and projected targets and also learn more about the other two bioagents they breed: the Tingid Bug and the Leaf Tying Moth. Leaf Tying Moth is still in the experimental stage (for breeding and releasing), but the Tingid Bug might be a near future consideration for us.

Dennis and his team from Healthy Land and Waterways also came along. Healthy Land and Waterways are the main users of these bioagents. They use a combination of chemical, mechanical and biological control methods to slow down the spread of weeds in local riparian hotspots. It was a brilliant opportunity to get feedback on how our bioagents are doing in the field and talk about his field observations, release methods and projected bioagent demand.

We also discussed organising a combined visit to the Brisbane Biosecurity Facility and also about visiting some release sites to see first-hand how our bioagents are faring in the wild. *By Jessica Raintree*

Our latest initiative—Pot recycling!

Have you struggled with finding ethical disposal of your plastic pots and trays? Find it irritating that you can’t properly recycle them?

Well, do we have some news for you! Here at MRL we finally have a means of properly disposing of your pots!

I know what you must be thinking... “how much is this going to cost us? I work hard for my money.” And we’re sure you do. That’s why, through the dual contribution of MRL and sponsor **Mooloolah Lions Club**, this service is **100% free** to the community! YAY!

Through this service, we will be collecting **only** black plastic pots black plastic trays, no clear plastics will be accepted unfortunately. They must be empty (no soil) and dropped off to our staff at the counter during our nursery open hours. Please respect these rules so we can keep the service free.

In many recycling bins most of the materials are just reused for the same purpose. However, the process of ours is a little different!

First off, our amazing volunteer, Dingo, strips all unnecessary parts from the pots and trays. This includes the screws, and other non-recyclables and disposes the rest into the bin shown above.

Once our bin is full, *Astron Sustainability* comes and picks it up for processing. At the processing plant, the plastic undergoes very strict washing and decontamination.



Our staff Sharon and Sarah showing off the pot recycling bin

This ensures that the resin made from the plastic is environmentally friendly, and ready for molding. During molding, Astron Sustainability transforms most of the recycled materials into irrigation pipes, garden pots, bins, tubes, crates, and so much more!

Thanks to the help of you, our Mooloolah Lion’s Club and Astron Sustainability we can do our part for the ethical disposal of these plastics, and the promotion of continued sustainability!

A huge THANKS goes to Dingo who came up with the idea, found Astron, and kept the process rolling so that we now have this wonderful service.

By Chris Urbanek



Mooloolah

Local Fauna Profile

Glossy black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*) is a Vulnerable listed species in Queensland. It is the smallest of the black-cockatoos at a total length of 48cm. It has a broad, bulbous bill and an inconspicuous crest.

This subdued but noble species is generally more cryptic, and not as raucous as, the other species of black cockatoo.

It prefers woodland environments either dominated by she-oaks or with a mid-stratum of she-oaks, which they feed almost exclusively on. They strip the seed pods from the tree, then tear them open with their strong beak to extract the seeds, leaving behind a tell-tale sign that they've visited by the dozens of discarded cones below their favourite food trees (called "orts").

They have been active recently in the Peachester area, seen travelling in small groups, and sighted in the residential backyards of some lucky residents. It is also regularly sighted on our newsletter cover page ;)

They have a brown-black head, neck and underparts, with red or orange-red tail panels and an otherwise dull black body. Adult females have extensive yellow patches on the head and neck and the tail panels tend to be more orange-red with black bars, but may become less barred and more red with age.

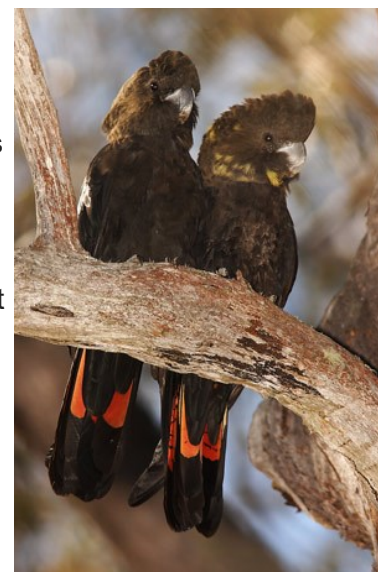


Image taken from : <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/conservation-and-ecological-communities/threatened-species-factsheets/>

By Karen Schmidt

What you can do to help:

Although they can appear scrappy, don't remove food trees for Glossy black-cockatoo which include Black she-oak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*) and Forest she-oak (*A. torulosa*).

Both species are available at our nursery, so if you have some space, plant a few! The cockatoo breeds in tree hollows, usually Eucalypts, so ensure to retain any large, old trees at your property, particularly those with hollows.

Contribute sightings to the Glossy Black Conservancy central database mapping where sightings of the species, their nests and feeding sites can be uploaded (<https://glossyblack.org.au/>).

Water Bug Macroinvertebrate Monitoring

Did you know that MRL currently tests water quality at 17 sites the Mooloolah River and have been conducting water quality tests along the river for more than 20 years, which is proudly supported by the Sunshine Coast Council grants program.

Another way to test the health of a waterway is by identifying what waterbugs live in the water. The type and number of waterbugs found in a waterway can tell us a lot about how healthy a waterway is.

Our Bug Lady, Biocontrol officer Jessica, was keen to hop in the river and catch bugs so has recently purchased a Waterbug Monitoring kit from the Waterbug Shop. She has also taken it for a spin at one of our upper Mooloolah testing sites. She went with Paul, who has been conducting our water monitoring testing for the last 13 years.

They were accompanied by Leesa, a super keen biocontrol volunteer. Jessica is currently learning about how to conduct waterbug surveys and brush up on her bug collecting techniques with the aim of running waterbug/invertebrate workshops for our volunteers and oth-



Paul at a monitoring site and Leesa analysing the waterbugs (photos: J. Raintree)

Final Notes

We are excited about two new projects we'd like to get started/refreshed at MRL and would love to hear if you're interested in being involved. We'd love to have a revegetation group and a seed collecting group who meet monthly and go out in the catchment to do some revegetating and seed collecting. If you'd like to be involved by volunteering, helping arrange sites, or by having our group lend you a hand with your planting or collect native seed from your property, be sure to contact us (coordinator@mrwl.org.au).

I'll end with handy news from the Bureau for SEQ, October is very likely to have above average rainfall, and October to December is likely to be wetter than average for the east coast. This is good news for both that planting project you've been putting off, and unfortunately for Cane toads heard calling again recently. Solve both problems by popping in to the nursery for plants and to sign up to the Cane Toad Challenge.

Karen Schmidt, Coordinator MRL.

Where we are:

Holcim Site
2670 Steve Irwin Way
Glenview Qld
Ph: (07) 5494 5074

Nursery Operating Times

Wednesday: 8.00am to 4.00pm and
Saturday: 9am - 1pm.

Volunteer days: Monday & Tuesday

We're on the Web:

www.mooloolahwaterwatchandlandcare.org



Mooloolah River Landcare

Email:

Nursery: nursery@mrwl.org.au
General: coordinator@mrwl.org.au

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