



Mooloolah River Landcare

Spring Edition

Newsletter issue 48 - September 2021

Sunshine Coast Council grant turns heads

MRL regularly hears comments from customers and workshop attendees such as 'I didn't know that you (MRL) were here, although I drive by often', or 'I missed the turn' and 'you're difficult to find'. While this has been a known problem for many years, MRL hasn't had the resources to address it...until now.

MRL commissioned some fancy new banner signage on our road frontage and front gate, while tidying up our entrance and the road verge, all proudly supported by Sunshine Coast Council's minor grants program. The revamped frontage has been turning heads since it was installed!



Building Expansion Update

- ◆ Quotes are being sourced from builders as part of a Gambling Communities Fund grant. Our current facility will expand to include a community meeting place for workshops, increased office space and storage, and an improved undercover area. Given that builders are flat-out, getting quotes is proving challenging, but MRL hopes to settle soon on a design and a price.

Nursery opening: Wednesday—8.00am to 4.00pm Saturday—9.00am to 1.00pm

Volunteer days: Monday & Tuesday **MRL phone:** (07) 5494 5074

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



Ann McGrath leading a recent (COVID safe) "Let's go for a walk" activity at Mooloolah River N.P.

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Plant of the season

Alocasia brisbanensis

Photo by Sarah Robert 2021



Coordinators corner

We would love to hear members thoughts about our catchment. To whet your whistle, we are dangling the carrot of **3 free plants** to a member who provides the most insightful answers to the following.....

Q1. What is currently posing the biggest threat/s to the health of the Mooloolah River?

Q2. If you had a few million bucks to spend improving the health of the Mooloolah River and its catchment, how would you spend it?

Q3. If you had less than \$50k to spend, what actions would you take?

Q4. What areas of the catchment, or land types/uses, need the most attention?

Email your answers and suggestions to coordinator@mrwl.org.au

Our latest project: Wicked Weeds

Thanks to a Seqwater 'Water Future Program Community Grant', the MRL Biocontrol team will be launching an exciting new youth-led, program called Wicked Weeds.

Youth leaders, "Weed Warriors," working in close collaboration with the Biocontrol team, will create a series of learning events and field based actions. Activities could include weed walks (friends or identification walks or kayaking adventures), creating short films, being involved in bioagent releases and monitoring events, researching and reaching out to other groups on the Sunshine Coast involved in weed busting, creating a weed database for the MRL website, etc.

To be a Weed Warrior it is not necessary to have prior knowledge of weeds. What is more important is an interest in learning and an action based approach to helping our riparian areas.

We aim to launch and have our first event at World Rivers Day (Sunday the 26th of September) so we are busy assembling our team now.

Watch the MRL Facebook page to join in on Wicked Weeds activities.



Weed species—small-leaf privet
(*Ligustrum sinense*)

Fast Facts:

- ◆ MRL participated in a recent regional action planning workshop focussed on the waterways in SEQ
- ◆ The workshop was facilitated by Healthy Land and Water
- ◆ Discussion included how best to manage/improve our waterways in next few decades?
- ◆ 3 free plants to the member who provides the most insightful answers
- ◆ email answers and suggestions to coordinator@mrwl.org.au

Fast Facts:

Wicked Weeds project

- ◆ Wicked Weeds will focus on:
 - raising awareness;
 - increasing knowledge; and
 - providing positive community actions.
- ◆ Aims to protect and restore health of the Mooloolah River.
- ◆ Targeting weeds that threaten river health.
- ◆ Stay tuned for upcoming weed walk learning events.
- ◆ First activity on the first Saturday of October.
- ◆ Then 1st Saturday of every month.

MRL's Let's Go for a Walk activities

In late 2015, a gathering of MRL members was inspired to create opportunities to support land management aspirations on each other's properties. Interests included local plants, wildlife, weeds and practical on-ground action. The concept was initially called Members4Members and the first activity was held in January 2016. MRL member Ann McGrath took a lead in making the concept a reality.



One of the magnificent eucalypts observed on the recent Mooloolah River National Park walk

By early 2020, the idea had evolved to become a regular bush walking activity and was rebranded to "Let's go for a walk" with a focus on natural areas rather than member's properties. Events proceed rain, hail or shine, with a regular group of walkers being joined by other members, depending on the location and their interests.

Ann McGrath continues to help out with the activities but events are now organised and lead by a number of MRL members. "It has been a lovely progression for the concept. I just love getting out and sharing my enjoyment of bush walking with other MRL members" Ann said. Ann's dedication and commitment to this regular outing is most appreciated by MRL (thanks Ann) and by the intrepid explorers who venture into the wild each month with her.

The September walk (18th, 2pm) is to Maddocks Wetlands in Glenview (opposite the GoKart Track).



Guided walk through an Ilkley property (left), afternoon tea, Brannock's Reserve (right)

Let's go for a walk—Fast Facts:

- ◆ A need for MRL member's to interact on common land management challenges was identified.
- ◆ Members4Members was developed to support land management aspirations for MRL members, particularly newcomers to the area.
- ◆ Lead by MRL member Ann McGrath, who has been involved since the first meeting to discuss options held in December 2015.
- ◆ Initially focussed on visiting member's properties with mutual support for practical revegetation, weed management and wildlife habitat actions on property.
- ◆ Evolved to a more natural areas focus and just enjoying the bush.
- ◆ Rebranded as "Let's go for a walk" in January 2020.
- ◆ Held monthly, generally on the 3rd Saturday, and open to members and non-members (unless otherwise advised).
- ◆ Event details are published early each month on the MRL Facebook page and emailed to members.
- ◆ Walks are nominated and lead by an MRL member.
- ◆ Technical expertise on the day is dependent on who joins the walk—it may be a bird nerd, a butterfly guru or a plant nut—that's part of the attraction (and the fun) for those participating.

Busy period for the Biocontrol team

The Bug Day Out was a huge success!

The Biocontrol team hosted its first open day, The Bug Day Out, on the 26th of June - the first day of school holidays. The day celebrated “all things bug” with interactive insect displays and activities for all ages. This was an opportunity for the public to: 1) learn about the amazing world of insects, 2) speak to the biocontrol team about the beetle bioagents program, and 3) to understand more about the invasive weeds targeted by our beetle bioagents.

The Bug Day Out was a key event for the Sunshine Coast Environment Council’s world environment day and we are looking forward to hosting another event next winter.



Part of the massive 300+ crowd (left) and launch of the Butterfly Garden (right)

Butterfly Garden Update

The Biocontrol team’s Native Butterfly garden is really starting to find its roots! The aim of our little garden is to showcase locally native species of plants that gardeners can grow to attract and host butterflies in their gardens. As our nursery specialises in tube stock, the garden is also a great way for visitors to see larger sized plants.

The plant and butterfly species lists are also available upon request. Visitors are welcome during public trading hours or upon request. Why not start your very own butterfly garden this Spring?

A big Welcome to our new biocontrol volunteers

MRL welcomed more amazing bio-volunteers to the team. Many volunteers are university students studying in environmental fields and keen to get industry experience. People from all ages and fields are welcome: seeing what we do and helping to regenerate local habitat.

ALERT. Spring brings lots of beetle bioagent activity. The bio-team is setting up spring/summer breeding cages and gearing up for a busy season releasing beetle bioagents. Helping in the fight against two weeds of national significance: Cats Claw Creeper and Madeira Vine.

Fast Facts:

- ◆ Over 300 people attended the Bug Day Out.
- ◆ Bug Day Out activities included:
 - face-painting
 - “bug” gel print masterpieces
 - Mooloolah River macroinvertebrates
 - pop up bug shop (amazing insect inspired jewellery and art)
 - insect eating for sustainability
 - access to an entomologist’s beautiful insect collections
- ◆ A native butterfly garden was unveiled, with native butterfly host plants for sale.
 - the plants are growing quickly and bursting with new growth and flowers
 - word is spreading amongst our insect friends, with our first butterfly visitors to the garden
 - demonstrates the host plants for local butterfly species and what their caterpillars look like
- ◆ Most plants in the butterfly garden are available for purchase at the nursery.



Butterfly Garden at MRL

Photo Gallery—Bug Day Out, 26th June 2021



The Bug Day Out crew (left) and covering our shed wall in butterfly chalk graffiti (right), Bug Day Out



Some of the kids' activity options at the Bug Day Out—face painting (left) gel prints (centre) and macroinvertebrates (right)



Michelle Gleeson provides a Bugs Ed talk (left), bug cookies and other insect delights (right)

Photo Gallery—Member's working bee



Repairing the propagation shelves (left) our “Pinks” had their last days at the working bee (centre), burying edging (right)



No-one was left out at the members working bee— all hands on deck!



Following a safety audit of the MRL office and nursery, a key activity of the member's working bee was tidying up the complex (left), while a number of new power points were installed to improve electrical safety (right)

Project News

Bugs to the Rescue

The wonderful MRL school outreach program, Bugs to the Rescue, has successfully reached its conclusion. The Biocontrol team worked closely with the teachers from three local schools where a range of interactive and exciting classroom activities were delivered.

Macroinvertebrate Monitoring

Did you know MRL has been testing water quality at many sites on the Mooloolah River for the last 20 years? A 12 month blitz has delivered monthly macroinvertebrate monitoring activities at our water testing sites to get a true picture of the river's health.



Bugs to the Rescue classroom activities (left), macroinvertebrate collection (right)

Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Grant

MRL is the lucky recipient of a 'Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Grant'. The grant aims to mobilise, build capacity, increase participation and support Landcare and community groups, landowners, land managers and other partners to enhance the recovery and maximise resilience of native plant and animal species and ecological communities to bushfire.

For our catchment, we are targeting actions to improve the resilience of the Critically Endangered Lowland Subtropical Rainforest, which is present along much of our waterways in the upper catchment.



Fast Facts:

Bugs to the Rescue!

- ◆ engaging outdoor classroom science activities at 3 local schools
- ◆ explored the importance of insects in our ecosystems
- ◆ fabulous feedback from students
- ◆ seeking continuing program funding for 2022

Macroinvertebrate monitoring:

- ◆ monthly invertebrate study activities are open to the public
- ◆ anyone in the community is welcome to help monitor Mooloolah River health
- ◆ to get involved, contact Biocontrol officer Jessica Raintree at mrwl.projects@gmail.com

Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Grant

- ◆ Program jointly managed by Landcare Australia and National Landcare Network, delivered in conjunction with relevant State and Territory Landcare organisations.
- ◆ Much of our lowland subtropical rainforest has been cleared or degraded with only fragmented patches remaining along rivers and creeks.
- ◆ Under further threat from Weeds of National Significance.

Plant of the season: *Alocasia brisbanensis* (cunjevoi or native elephant ear)



Photo by Glenn Leiper

Alocasia...from Greek kolokāsiā, lotus root
brisbanensis..1st described, Enoggera Ck., Brisbane

A beautiful native species that can be an indoor pot plant or planted outdoors surrounding frog ponds, dams or as a feature plant in the garden.

Cunjevoi flower photo by Glenn Leiper

Environment Levy Partnership

Another (financial) year has come to a close, which for MRL means that another year of generous support from Sunshine Coast Regional Council, through their Environment Levy Program, has concluded.

Fortunately Council have kindly offered to continue the partnership over the next three years! MRL is **Proudly Supported by the Sunshine Coast Council's Environment Levy** Thanks SCRC!



Fast Facts:

- ◆ up to 1.8 meters with large leaves
- ◆ fragrant creamy yellow flowers which attract native bees
- ◆ bright red berries, which germinate easily and are fantastic bird food
- ◆ **CAUTION:** All parts of cunjevoi are poisonous, so ensure children and domestic pets do not ingest it.

Fast Facts:

Environment Levy Program funding:

- ◆ generously contributes to the running of our organisation, nursery and biocontrol agent breeding program
- ◆ allows MRL to run several workshops and learning sessions
- ◆ supports water quality monitoring and seed collection, increasing diversity of nursery stock.



DEDUCTIBLE GIFT RECIPIENT

Anyone wishing to donate to our organisation can receive back a deductible gift recipient (DGR) tax benefit from the Australian Tax Office