

Autumn Edition

Newsletter issue 50 - April 2022

WILD WEATHER!

February brought with it wild weather, with water inundating all areas of our facility, excepting the toilet! (If you want to take the high road at MRL, it turns out you'll end up at the loo).

Office clean up, carpet removal, and facility sort-out ensued. While it's been a hassle, it has also brought about a renewed vigour, with areas/items being sorted, cleaned and simplified.

I'd like to give a huge shout out to those involved during the flood event, in the immediate clean up, and now in the ongoing work to remove items, find replacements, and refresh areas. Our volunteers have been very giving of their time and their resources to clean, repair and replenish our facility, and make it better than before. Thank You!



Flooding on Steve Irwin Way at height of the weather (top)

The nursery, while staff could still get access (bottom)



MRL welcomes our new part-time Nursery Assistant (generally Saturday mornings) Anja Siebers.

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Sterculia quadrifida (peanut tree—fruits)

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



Coordinators corner

Welcome to MRL!

During February and March we welcomed two new faces to MRL, Anja Siebers and Karen Meers.

Anja is a Nursery Assistant and you might recognise her from her previous volunteering with MRL and her regular visits as one of the 'Pinks' (Conservation and Land Management trainees) with Ecollaboration.

Karen Meers is our Administration Assistant, helping out for a few hours each week, getting us organised, streamlined and on-track.

We are so glad to have you both on board. Welcome to the team Anja and Karen!



Karen Meers



New Nursery Manager Gemma

Nursery musings

MRL is pleased to announce that Gemma Cotterell has been appointed as the new Nursery Manager. Gemma has recently moved back to Queensland and will commence work with MRL on Monday 9th May. Gemma will be mainly working on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday each week.

Ten Ecollaboration Certificate1 Conservation & Ecosystem Management trainees are experiencing nursery life each Wednesday. For many, the course is a first step into a professional field, and assists in learning the ropes in a commercial environment plus developing teamwork. With a diverse range of species at the nursery, ordered into growth habit, size, & habitat niche, the trainees are appreciating where species grow and why.

Ally and Francesca note that "Suzanne is an incredible wealth of knowledge and has never shied away from telling industry secrets she's learned. Working at the nursery has highlighted the fundamental importance of taking time to care for nature, one plant at a time".



Fast Facts:

- ◆ Anja started in February and she'll mainly be about on Saturdays
- ◆ A Mooloolah Valley local, Anja is also a rehabilitation contractor
- ◆ Karen brings a wealth of relevant experience to MRL, including as a former nursery Office Manager
- ◆ Karen has two lovely girls and is a Landsborough local
- ◆ Say hello next time you are at MRL

Fast Facts:

- ◆ Gemma was most recently a Horticulturist at Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens
- ◆ Experience includes Acting Team Leader, Horticulture
- ◆ Gemma was previously a Retail Nursery Horticulturist at CERES Permaculture and Bushfood Nursery
- ◆ Trainees gain ACDC and chainsaw licenses for transferable industry skills
- ◆ An opportunity to work alongside inspiring experts in the field
- ◆ Working at MRL fast tracks plant ID skills, especially in juvenile stages
- ◆ A major takeaway for the trainees is the ever-changing knowledge in the industry - new plants in cultivation, new techniques and plenty of tricks of the trade

Biocontrol news

Biocontrol Update

MRL's biocontrol facility has bred and released 2400 Madeira beetles and 32,420 Jewel beetles, for the season to date, to help with our battle against Madeira vine and Cat's claw creeper respectively. MRL endeavours to continually improve the biocontrol facility with an aim to increase bioagent release numbers.



Beetles packaged up and ready to release

Macroinvertebrate Monitoring...coming to a school near you!

Following the success of MRL's Bugs to the Rescue macroinvertebrate outdoor classroom last year, MRL successfully applied for a Unity Water Community Grant to continue the program.

The program aims to increase awareness, facilitate student/community learning opportunities and inspire the interest of students and the wider community in science-based actions for a healthy Mooloolah River.

Stay tuned for community events or contact us if your local school would like us to come to them.



Macroinvertebrate identification and counting

Fast Facts:

- ◆ releases into fragile riparian ecosystems in our battle against our top two, terrible environmental invasive weeds
- ◆ beetle bioagents have an appetite for the target weeds yet leave other plants alone
- ◆ the beetles have a big job to do and need human support
- ◆ integrated pest management approaches are needed to effectively battle these weeds
- ◆ visitors and volunteers are welcome to learn more about, or get experience in, breeding biological control agents at the facility
- ◆ local schools and communities will benefit from involvement in the macroinvertebrate monitoring project
- ◆ participants will have 'hands-on' experiences of macroinvertebrate based water quality monitoring
- ◆ a big thanks to Unity Water for support through the Unity Water Community Grants program



Biocontrol news

Bugs to the Rescue...and Rescuing Bugs

The Hon. Meaghan Scanlon MP, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs, has announced the 40 successful Engaging Science Grants recipients for 2022...and MRL was successful! MRL's new program is called "Bugs to the Rescue...and Rescuing Bugs". Building on last year's "Bugs to the Rescue" program we aim to deliver meaningful citizen science action and engage with scientists while monitoring, restoring and creating new habitats in the catchment, schools and homes.

Bug Club

Wednesday 27th April from 3:30—5:00pm will be the first meeting of BUG CLUB. Bug Club is especially designed for amateur or budding entomologists. It is open to all ages (but children must be accompanied by an adult). The idea is to get outside with fellow insect enthusiasts and marvel at the fascinating world of bugs. Follow our Facebook event page for more information.

Bug Club is an exciting addition to our Bugs to the Rescue...and Rescuing Bugs program. Proudly supported by the Queensland Government-Engaging Science Grants.

The Sunshine Coast Big Butterfly Count

In March MRL was part of the first ever Sunshine Coast Big Butterfly Count. Inspired by the Brisbane Big Butterfly count, a range of organisations got together to launch this citizen science program on the Sunshine Coast! The count launched with 9 days of workshops and group butterfly surveys, logging all the results on the BioCollect app. Stay tuned for announcements of the results and future surveys.



All the action from the butterfly ID workshop

Fast Facts:

- ◆ project is off to a flying start
- ◆ participated in the Sunshine Coast Big Butterfly Count in March
 - hosted a butterfly ID talk
 - butterfly survey event
- ◆ launch of the Bug Club
- ◆ delivery of two iNaturalist workshops in April

- ◆ the Bug Club will meet fortnightly on Wednesday afternoons (during school terms) at various locations
- ◆ the club will
 - collect field-based data on insect populations
 - conduct pollinator surveys and
 - hopefully, inspire a new generation of natural scientists

- ◆ collaborative venture with Sunshine Coast Council, Barung Landcare, Forest Heart Nursery, Coolum Native Nursey, Brush Turkey Enterprises & Mooloolah River Landcare
- ◆ MRL hosted "Get to Know your Local Butterflies" an onsite butterfly survey and a fascinating butterfly ID talk with Brisbane butterfly expert and author, Helen Schwencke and her amazing butterfly tracking daughter, Amelia Schwencke

Photo Gallery—weed workshops



Joan Heavey (left) & Sonia MacDonald (right) with great weed samples and a range of useful weed publications



Workshop participants were right into the topic and asked loads of questions throughout the workshops (see page 6)



Passionate Weed Warriors sharing their knowledge during community Weed Walks

Project News

Wicked Weeds

The Weed Warriors have been busy over the last few months learning about weeds and sharing what they have learnt with the community

through their Wednesday Weed of the Week social media posts and several community Weed Walks. At the last Weed Walk, the Warriors went back to a site scoped out earlier and did a little community weeding and a small planting as well. The area experienced some massive flooding recently but the planting somehow survived! At the helm of the Wicked Weeds program are a passionate group of youth, the Weed Warriors, who are keen to make a difference.

March-ing Against Weeds

As part of our Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Project, MRL ran a two-part series on weeds during March.

MRL team member Anja provided workshop #1 about weed control methods. This was followed a week later with weed identification featuring local weed experts Joan Heavey and Sonia MacDonald from Noosa Integrated Catchment Association. Joan and Sonia are the authors of "Weeds of the Sunshine Coast".

Participants were very lucky to have these knowledgeable women generously share their experience with us. They provided easy-to-remember tips on telling weeds apart, along with the native look-alikes, and helped us identify some samples brought from home.

Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery Projects are funded by the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery Program for Wildlife and their Habitat.



Fast Facts:

- ◆ Wicked Weeds program is a youth lead program focused on action based community learning.
- ◆ the Weed Warriors will conduct a weed repurposing activity and will be hosting a "Weaving with Weeds" workshop (check fb events), bookings are essential and placements are limited
- ◆ program is proudly supported by Seqwater Community Grants

Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery workshops

- ◆ project focussed on protection & enhancement of our catchment's lowland sub-tropical rainforest
- ◆ storms postponed our first workshop session which was about weed identification
- ◆ Sonia MacDonald & Stephanie Haslam, authored 'Sedges, Rushes & Restiads of the Noosa Biosphere Reserve & Surrounding Regions' & 'Grasses – Native & Introduced Grasses of the Noosa Biosphere Reserve & Surrounding Regions'
- ◆ MRL stocks all three books which can be purchased at the nursery



Plant of the season:

Sterculia quadrifida
(peanut tree)

Sterculia.....after the Roman God of manure heaps, Sterculius, due to the smell of the flowers and leaves of certain species

quadrifida.....*quadri* — four, *fidus* — split, referring to the calyx being split into four lobes

The peanut flavoured nuts may be eaten raw or roasted once the paper-like skin is removed.



Fast Facts:

- ◆ grows to 10m in cultivation
- ◆ semi-deciduous fast growing small tree with spreading canopy
- ◆ suitable for dry situations and attractive to birds and bees
- ◆ perfumed, cream, bell-shaped white flowers—red seed capsules
- ◆ available now at MRL nursery

Fast Facts:

- ◆ the works are thanks to a generous grant from the Tucker Foundation
- ◆ the Foundation is a charitable trust known as the Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation
- ◆ the Foundation supports creative, humanitarian and environmental interests



ALBERT & BARBARA
TUCKER FOUNDATION

Tucking-in to some much-needed reno's

Over the next couple of months MRL will see some long-awaited renovations occurring to the nursery propagation area.

The work will improve working conditions, including roof insulation to reduce the scorching temperatures and installation of shade cover on the western side. There will also be improvements to equipment, including a new seed fridge, which was recently commissioned!

OUR SPONSORS



DEDUCTIBLE GIFT RECIPIENT ANYONE DONATING TO OUR ORGANISATION IS ELIGIBLE FOR A DEDUCTIBLE GIFT RECIPIENT (DGR) TAX BENEFIT FROM THE AUSTRALIAN TAX OFFICE.