

SLCMA Catchment News 2021



March

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*Office opening
hours:
9am-4pm weekdays.*

*Other times by
appointment, please
call 4956 1388 :)*

Staff

Administration Officer
Kristy Thomsett

Coordinator
Saskia von Fahland

Nursery Officer
Susie Tomlinson

Project Officer
Morgan Thomas

Call us for information:

- ◆ Weed management
- ◆ Plant identification
- ◆ Land management
- ◆ FREE property visits
- ◆ Land for Wildlife

Volunteer opportunities:

SLCMA Community
Volunteer Program,
Wednesday 9-12 noon—
**please register prior, to
attend.**

Native plants available for
purchase \$3 each.

SLCMA Executive 20/21

Chair: Mark Evans

Vice-chair: Lachlan McBride

Treasurer: Kevin Plumb

Secretary: Shirley Sidey

Executive members:

Sandy Evans
Karen May



SLCMA News!

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS — To ensure that all visitors, volunteers and staff stay as safe as possible. Please be aware of the following procedures when visiting the SLCMA Office and SLCMA Community Nursery.

- ◆ Please do NOT visit if you are feeling unwell, have recently travelled to known hotspots or have been in contact with someone who has had the COVID-19 virus.
- ◆ All visitors must:
 - ◆ Complete the sign-in/out register
 - ◆ Maintain social distancing (minimum 1.5m spacing)
 - ◆ Utilise hand sanitiser supplied upon entry & exit to the office or nursery

Welcome to our newest team members!



Susie Tomlinson,
Nursery Officer

Hello Landcarers! My name is Susie Tomlinson, and I am happy to announce that I am the new Nursery Officer here at SLCMA.

I have lived in Sarina Since 2006 after relocating from the Northern Territory. Shortly after arriving I began volunteering at the SLCMA nursery on Wednesday mornings. I have always had a passion for plants, gardening and nature, but I think volunteering at the nursery is how my interest in native plants and preserving the natural environment was ignited and I met Saskia! Such a passionate and knowledgeable ambassador for everything Landcare is about.

I was able to volunteer for about two and a half years before I had to stop, as my hours as Teacher Aide at Swayneville Primary had increased to include Wednesday mornings. Later I worked at Mitre10 Sarina where part of my role was looking after the plant nursery. Then I did a year at Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal for Sarina Mini Excavators maintaining the grounds.
See you in the Nursery!

Hi, my name is Alana Campbell and I am the new team leader for the Reef Assist Revegetation Team.

I live in Sarina, but I am originally from South West New South Wales, where I spent many years as a Noxious Weeds Officer for Balranald Shire Council. Since moving to Queensland, I have worked in revegetation, including for Sarina Landcare Casual Revegetation team.

I have always had an interest in the land and wildlife. Growing up on an Emu farm with my parents, who also share-farmed wheat and barley and had their own earthworks company, I have been exposed to a variety of different industries which have provided me with experience and training that has allowed me to succeed in natural resource management. My work in conservation land management originally started through a Green Corps program which has brought me to where I am today.

I look forward to meeting everyone and am excited to get stuck into some on-ground works to help strengthen our natural areas and assist the community.



Alana Campbell, Reef
Assist Team Leader

Hi, my name is Darrin Fuller and I am the new Reef Assist Revegetation Officer.

I currently live in Sarina and have been living in and around the area all my life when not in the military. I spent the past 18 years as an underground miner but felt the need for a lifestyle change and so that I could be with my family more. I have always enjoyed gardening and growing things, which led me to begin a Conservation Land Management Course which further strengthened my passion for natural resource management.

I am eager and determined to learn as much as possible to help strengthen my abilities and make a meaningful contribution to the work SLCMA does not, and to help benefit our local community.



Darrin Fuller, Reef
Assist Revegetation

Weed Feature: Mock Orange (*Murraya paniculata*)

One of the most common garden plants we see both in gardens in our catchment AND invading native vegetation is Mock orange (*Murraya paniculata*). Mock orange is a bushy shrub or small tree, typically growing between 2 and 4 metres tall with glossy green leaflets and fragrant flowers born in clusters at the tips of branches or in the upper leaf forks. The fruit are small, egg-shaped or oval and turn from green to orange to bright red in colour as they mature.

Mock orange is native to southern China, Taiwan and the Indian sub-continent, Asia and northern Australia (northern parts of NT and far north QLD) and has become a very popular ornamental plant within Australia. This popularity is due to the fact that it is a low-maintenance plant, can be used to easily create a hedge/screen (through pruning), has constant green-glossy dense foliage, and has perfumed white flowers which can cover most of the plant.

Unfortunately, as with many garden ornamental plants being planted outside their natural distribution, Mock orange is now widely naturalised in the coastal districts of eastern QLD and northern NSW. This species is now considered an environmental weed, invading closed forests, open woodlands, watercourses, native bushland, forest margins, pastures, disturbed sites, waste areas, gardens and roadsides, eluding to its ability to easily spread. The first recording of mock orange being naturalised dates back to 1963, in Sandgate, south-east Queensland (SEQ) and it is now among the top 200 most invasive plant species in SEQ.

So how is it spreading? Mock orange reproduces by seed which may not seem too concerning, but given the fruit's popularity with birds and some other fruit-eating animals (who will disperse the seed), it has been able to spread without much restriction. For instance, one study showed that mock orange formed 12-14% of the non-*ficus* proportion of figbird (*Sphecothebes viridis*) diet, and those fruit eaten by the figbird (seed then dispersed via guano) had a higher mean germination rate (75%) compared with the germination rates of seed which naturally dropped from the bush (61%) (White *et al.* 2006). Likewise, a survey of sub-tropical rainforest patches in Brisbane found that mock orange had established at **all** sites, and can grow to maturity beneath intact rainforest canopy (eluding to its ability to perform even in low-light conditions). Locally mock orange can be seen germinating readily in many areas of bushland such as the Sarina Inlet Trail and Plane Creek Revegetation Site.

There are two main control options recommended for controlling mock orange. Newly established or isolated seedlings can be removed by hand, grubbing, brush cutting or chain sawing. Larger specimens may require cut-stump or stem injecting with a permitted herbicide.

On a positive note, we are fortunate to have a very similar local native Mock orange (*Murraya ovatifoliolata*) that can be used as an alternative to the weedy Mock orange (*Murraya paniculate*). SLCMA will soon have the native Mock orange available as tubestock in our community nursery. While it is slower growing, it is definitely worth considering utilising in your garden.

Information sourced from: White, E. M., Vivian-Smith, G., Gosper, C. R., Preston, C., Watts, J. H., & Crossman, N. D. (2006). *Murraya paniculata*: what is the potential for this popular ornamental plant to become an environmental weed. In Fifteenth Australian Weeds Conference (pp. 63-66). Brisbane city council. (n.d.). *Weed Identification Tool*. Retrieved from: <https://weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au/weeds/mock-orange>

Photos: Sheldon Navie



Above: Leaves of weedy Mock orange



Above: Flowers of weedy Mock orange



Above: Fruit of weedy Mock orange

Weed Spotters Network QLD

In the Mackay-Whitsunday region—Keep an eye out for these weeds in March

Weed name

Alternanthera philoxeroides
(Alligator Weed)

Limncharis flava
(Yellow burrhead)

Mikania micrantha
(Mikania vine)

Neptunia oleraceae/ *N. plena*
(Water mimosa)

Solanum viarum
(Tropical soda apple)

Characteristics and habitat

Hollow stems, white flowers
Wetlands and creeklines

Triangular stems, yellow flowers
Water bodies and margins

Heart shaped leaf, smothering habit

Fern-like leaf, pithy stems that float
Can dominate a water body

Resembles a variegated cherry
tomato, thorny leaves; sale yards,
abattoirs



Sarina Catchment Waterwatch

Our water quality monitoring program kicked off last month, with Project Officer Morgan taking our citizen scientists out to each of the sites and providing training on how to use and record the water testing equipment.

Our citizen scientists are tasked with measuring a variety of physicochemical parameters in local waterways, using specific water quality testing instruments. The program measures temperature (of air and water), pH, electrical conductivity, dissolved oxygen and turbidity as well as recording onsite observations such as water colour, aquatic plants present and climatic conditions at the time.

So why do we collect this information?

Temperature is required for accurate determinations of pH, electrical conductivity and dissolved oxygen and has a significant influence on chemical (e.g., as temp increases, the maximum amount of dissolved oxygen decreases) and biological process (e.g., breeding).

pH is measured to determine the acidity or alkalinity of the water body. pH changes can affect aquatic organisms (e.g., reduce hatching and survival rates) and can also affect the solubility (e.g., changing pH can increase the solubility of phosphorus and other nutrients which can cause eutrophication) and toxicity of chemicals and heavy metals in the water.

Dissolved oxygen measures the amount of oxygen in its dissolved form in the water body which is essential for many forms of aquatic life.

Electrical conductivity is the measure of the water's ability to conduct electricity (due to dissolved salts) which helps us determine a measure of what is dissolved in the water.

Turbidity is the measure of the presence of soluble, suspended, and colloidal particles which hinder light transmission through water. Changes in turbidity can therefore affect the rate of photosynthesis and further impact the growth of plants or algae in the water body.

All of these particular parameters help us to understand what is happening in our local waterways so that we can help mitigate the impact of declining water quality. The Sarina Catchment Waterwatch program will run until 2023, with citizen scientists monitoring once a month for a few hours each time. If you would like to be involved, please contact our office and ask to talk to Morgan. This project is proudly supported by the Queensland Government – Queensland Citizen Science Grants.

Thank you Gail and Neil :)

We would like to acknowledge and thank two of our dedicated volunteers who will soon leave the Sarina area. Gail and Neil Bradley have volunteered with SLCMA since 2003, as both Waterwatch volunteers and as volunteers in the SLCMA Community Nursery.

Gail and Neil originally heard a 'call for volunteers' by SLCMA on the local radio and well...lets just say after 18 years of volunteering the rest is history. Through the Waterwatch program, Gail and Neil collected monthly ambient water quality data in Plane Creek between 2003 to 2011. The data collected was integral in providing an understanding of the health of the Plane Creek and formed part of the first Water Quality Improvement Plan for the region in 2008.

In the SLCMA Community Nursery, Gail and Neil have helped out with many tasks over the years, from seed collecting and propagating plants to preparing potting mix and weeding, stocktakes and labelling...and have watched and helped our nursery facility grow from an umbrella and plastic table to an awning and steel working benches complete with the electric fan!

Thank you Gail and Neil for your smiles and stories of travelling world, support for SLCMA and being great Landcarers! We wish you both the very best for your next adventure :)



Photo: M. Thomas



Photo: C. Hood

Top: Carolyn recording water quality data at a local creek
Bottom: Morgan collecting water sample from a local creek



Gail, Neil and Saskia enjoy a catch up over morning tea

Reef Assist Program

SLCMA has recently begun work as part of the "Reef Assist" program funded by the Queensland Government in an economic response to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The program was developed to deliver priority environmental projects and create roughly 130 nature-based employment opportunities for unemployed and underemployed Queenslanders in a variety of areas, and runs until November 2021.

As a result, SLCMA has been able to employ two new staff members as part of our Reef Assist team and increase hours for part-time employees. Our new two-person on-ground team will undertake focused and practical activities on a variety of public sites, targeted at controlling invasive weeds to improve the condition of natural habitat, while also supporting those local communities. Likewise, our team will revegetate where necessary, to help rehabilitate, restore and preserve our natural habitats and further build resilience in the landscape by enhancing vegetation corridors along riparian areas and between remnant vegetation. Some of the priority weeds which we are targeting in these public sites include Lantana (*Lantana camara*), exotic Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia elegans*), madeira vine (*Anredera cordifolia*) and cats claw creeper (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*).

Our Reef Assist team will also be working with some private landholders to manage, enhance and protect areas of remnant vegetation (including riparian zones and vegetation corridors) to help create linkages between remnant vegetation in the landscape and build resilience. Peri-urban and non-commercial rural properties collectively make up a large portion of our catchment area and consequently have potential to impact our local natural resources including water quality, soil health, native vegetation, and the associated native wildlife. Likewise, they do not have any peak industry support group/s to provide advice about sustainable land management and natural area restoration. The Reef Assist project is a proven method of supporting our local landholders to undertake sustainable land management practices and rehabilitation activities on their property, to protect their natural resources and minimise potential off-farm impacts.

Expressions of interest for private landholder properties are currently open on our website at the following link: <https://sarinalandcare.org.au/what-we-do/current-projects/> or follow the link on our Facebook page. Hard copies are also available at our office. All properties must be within the Sarina catchment, which covers from Alligator Creek in the North; Cattle Creek in the South, east to the Coral Sea and West to the Clarke Connors Range (we do support landholders on top of the range which includes properties from the range and west to Blue Mountain and Bolingbroke roads).

Participants will receive (for free): a property assessment, land management advice and written action plan. They will also receive up to 2 days of on-ground rehabilitation works on their property (such as weed control/revegetation). The on-ground works will align with the priorities highlighted during the property assessment and will enhance remnant, riparian or corridors of native vegetation within the property. Landholders will also receive up to 40 local native plants and plant guard kits to assist.

SLCMA Community Nursery Volunteer Program

It has been a busy month in the nursery weeding, cleaning, re-arranging, stocktaking and updating plant lists, procedures and manuals. The volunteers have kept busy with seed collecting, cleaning and propagating, potting on, weeding tube stock and washing used pots. We even built a compost bay from pallets to help recycle our green waste and used potting mix. Looking forward to seeing some good results. Special thanks to Pete and Mick for getting that project done. We hope to add 2 more bays in the future.

We recently had a successful seed collecting morning at Plane Creek revegetation site. We are lucky to have such a beautiful walking trail and seed resource in our community. Our volunteers collected Native mulberry (*Pipturus argenteus*), White cedar (*Melia azedarach*), Cluster fig (*Ficus racemosa*) and Liechhardt tree (*Nauclea orientalis*) seeds. Afterwards we enjoyed a refreshing morning tea in the park. Thanks to all the volunteers for your time this month.

If you would like to volunteer in your local community and meet new people while learning about local native plants and their propagation, come along to the SLCMA Community Volunteer morning, every Wednesday, 9am to 12noon. SLCMA Community Volunteer Program is proudly supported by Mackay Regional Council, Natural Environment Levy. For more details contact SLCMA on 4956 1388.



Photos: contributed
Weed control and revegetation, just some of the activities the Reef Assist team will undertake over the coming months.



Traditionally, Landcare has filled this role and thus



Photo: S von Fahland
Volunteers in awe of the size of a white cedar at Plane Creek Revegetation Site

Thank you Hastings Deering

Thank you to Hastings Deering, for their generous donation of office furniture to SLCMA and the other two Landcare groups (Whitsunday and Pioneer), recently. It is much appreciated by all of us and the items are already being put to good use.

Staff from SLCMA, PCL & WCL were excited to get the chance to work together recently when picking up office furniture, donated by Hastings Deering :)



Photos: contributed

Save the date!

More details coming soon.....

Sunday April 18

Native Bonsai Workshop, 2-4pm, *Funded through Community Environment Program*

Wednesday May 26

SLCMA General Meeting, 10.30am-11.30am, SLCMA Office, *Morning tea provided.*

Enhancing the Sarina Inlet Trail

The SLCMA Revegetation Team have been busy of late, working along the Sarina Inlet Trail. The on-ground works have included targeted control of weeds such as Singapore daisy, guinea grass, mother-in-law tongue and lantana as well as rubbish collection. Over the coming months the team will undertake revegetation in selected areas along the trail as well as ongoing weed control. We look forward to inviting the Sarina Community along for a guided walk of the site and unveiling of a new entrance sign (*more details coming soon*).

The Sarina Inlet trail is a 400m bush walking track that meanders through a small but diverse area of native coastal vegetation at Sarina Beach. The trail is well utilised by residents and visitors, providing a link between Sarina Beach and Johnson Beach.

Through this project, we are able to enhance the natural values of the area to ensure the integrity of the local environment is retained and enjoyed by the community for years to come. The project is funded through the Australian Government Communities Environment Program.



Photos: W von Fahland

Singapore daisy infestation along the trail (Before & After)



SLCMA Community Nursery 'Plant of the Month'

This month's 'Plant of the Month' is the **Brown Gardenia** (*Attractocarpus fitzalanii*). **Family:** Rubiaceae

What is in a name? *Attractocarpus* from the Greek *atractos* (spindle) and *karpos* (fruit) referring to the spindle shaped fruit of the species. *Fitzalanii*, named by German naturalist and Victorian State Botanist Ferdinand von Mueller after Eugene Fitzalan (1830-1911) who collected the first specimens of the plant on the Burdekin expedition in 1860.

Form: Shrub or small tree, to 8m.

Leaves: Simple opposite, bright lime coloured glossy leaves to 25cm long, distinctive sunken side-veins.

Flower: White, fragrant tubular flowers occur September to May, containing 5 prominent petals with overall diameter of 3cm. Flowers open in the afternoon, attracting day moths for fertilisation.

Fruit: Fleshy fruit, 4-8cm diameter, from green to yellow upon ripening, occur April to June. Whitish small, flat, triangular seeds surrounded by a soft pulp. Fresh fruit is edible.

Habitat: Rainforest, riparian forest.

Distribution: Cooktown to Central Coast of QLD.

Notes: This plant is becoming sought after in backyards for its beautifully scented flowers and lush growth. It is suitable for indoor or outdoor containers.



Images: S & A Pearson

The "**Plant of the Month**" is currently available from the SLCMA Community Nursery. Landcare members are eligible to receive 1 free "Plant of the Month", throughout that month. This and other native plant species are also available for purchase at \$3 each. All plants are grown from locally sourced seed in the SLCMA Community Nursery by SLCMA staff and the SLCMA Volunteer team.

Information sourced from: CQCLN Plant database www.cqclandcarenetwork.org.au, SGAP plant notes.



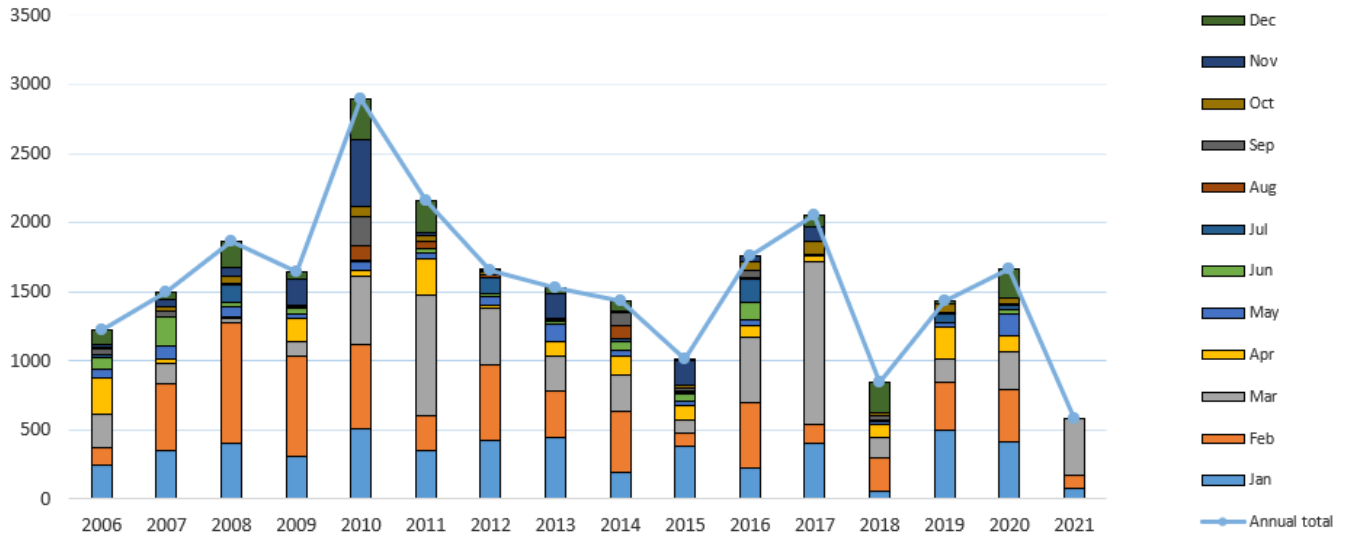
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What SLCMA Membership does for you !

A membership with SLCMA has many rewards:

- ◇ Easy access to Natural Resource Management information and extension
- ◇ Monthly newsletter, meeting minutes, progress and project reports
- ◇ A vote on issues in your catchment
- ◇ A say in the types of projects applied for
- ◇ Up to 10 free local native seedlings/year from the SLCMA Community Nursery
- ◇ Invitations to Natural Resource Management field days and workshops
- ◇ Copy of the SLCMA Annual Report

Monthly rainfall for SLCMA Office, 2006 -2021 (inc annual total)



Just for fun!

What did the big flower say to the little flower?

What's up, bud!

How do succulents confess their feelings?

"Aloe you vera much"

Why was the gardener so embarrassed? He wet his plants!

What do you call a cheerleading herb? An encourage-mint!

How did the gardener know his herbs were fully grown?

It was just about Thyme!

Gum Buds
by Gay Leung



Central QLD Coast
Landcare
Network

A partnership for the natural resource management of catchments in the Central Queensland Coast Bioregion: Pioneer, Sarina & Whitsunday Catchments.

Containers for Change

SLCMA has registered with Containers for Change for virtual donations and we are hoping that you will consider using our identifier code — **C10002138**. We also welcome physical donations of eligible containers to our office, feel free to contact us on 4956 1388, to arrange drop-off. Thankyou to those who have donated your containers, so far we have raised **\$241.00** —Thankyou :)



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SLCMA is proudly supported by:



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MICHELLE LANDRY MP
Federal Member for Capricornia

If you have any issues, don't hesitate to contact my office

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