

SLCMA Catchment News 2021



April

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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 and events!

SLCMA General Meeting— Landcare members, volunteers and project partners are invited to our General Meeting on 26 May 2021. The general meeting is a great opportunity to meet some of the Landcare team including staff and management committee members as well as find out what projects and programs are underway (or under development) with the Sarina Catchment area. It is a great opportunity for you to ask questions and share your local landcare project ideas.

When: 26 May 2021
Time: 10.30-11.30am
Where: SLCMA Office, 101 Beach Rd, Sarina
Morning tea will be provided :)

Koala-ty Information Session—Land for Wildlife Field Trip

When: 11 May 2021
Time: 9.30am—2.30pm (Sarina)
RSVP & cost: \$20 per person, rsvp due by 7 May 2021. See flyer for more details
*Supported by Mackay Regional Council
Natural Environment Levy*

** Date claimer **

Fishway Bus tour — 19 May 2021, details coming soon!
*Supported by Communities Environment
Program*



Native Bonsai Workshops...fun fun fun!

When you think of Bonsai, Australian native plants do not typically come to mind. Watty, a member of the Pioneer Bonsai Mackay group shone a new light on our native plants and how we can add an Australian style to the Bonsai culture. Watty is a passionate Bonsai enthusiast who recently held 2 workshops for budding "Bonsaists" at our SLCMA Community Nursery. Both workshops were well attended on the Sunday and Wednesday with a mix of Sarina Landcare members, the nursery volunteers and members of the community.

Watty spoke about the history of Bonsai and his journey with this plant culture. He displayed a small bonsai collection of *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (River she-oak), and took us through the different stages of growing bonsai. Then it was time to get hands-on and create our own native bonsai. Snipping roots and limbs then potting our trees, hopeful that they will live on. Questions and answers continued over morning/afternoon tea bringing the workshops to a close.

Much thanks to Watty for a most informative and fun workshop. Hopefully, we will see him again in the future for another workshop or two!

The workshops were supported by the Communities Environment Program and Mackay Regional Council Natural Environment Program.

Photos: S Tomlinson



Above: Participants learning about bonsai.



Above: Participants learning about bonsai and native *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (river she-oak)

Weed Feature: Commelina and Wandering Jew

A groundcover we see growing in many of our sites and properties within our catchment are the dayflowers (*Commelina sp.*). Unfortunately, the two native species which occur naturally in the area are commonly misidentified, or mistaken for the introduced wandering jew (*Tradescantia sp.*) because they superficially resemble each other, even though they are in fact in a completely different genus e.g. *Commelina sp.*, *Tradescantia sp.*. So how do you tell the difference between the *Commelina* and *Tradescantia* species two and even between those within each genus? Keep reading to find out!

Dayflowers, otherwise known as Commelina's are a fleshy, sprawling groundcover with ascending branches up to 1m tall. The two most common native species within our area are the Blue Commelina (*Commelina diffusa*) and the Queensland Wandering Sailor (*Commelina lanceolata*). Like many successful groundcovers, commelinas readily root at the nodes (meaning they can reproduce vegetatively) but can also reproduce via seed. Leaves of the native commelinas range from lanceolate to ovate and can be glabrous (hairless) or hispid (bristly) depending on the species. Typically, *Commelina lanceolata* has more lance-like leaves compared to *Commelina diffusa*, hence its name. The flowers of both are blue and have three petals of the same size (this feature differs notably between native and exotic species). Dayflowers function as a valuable groundcover in bushland because they can quickly establish on bare soil, removing the chances of weed colonisation, while also providing some means of erosion control. Likewise, dayflowers provide a key habitat for invertebrates and lizards on the forest floor.

The exotic commelina, commonly known as the Hairy Commelina (*Commelina benghalensis*) is a major environmental weed (listed in the 200 most invasive plants in SEQ), particularly along waterways, disturbed bushlands, and cropland. The Hairy Commelina typically has thicker stems, broader fleshier stems, grows more aggressively and doesn't die back in the dry season. However, one of the most common means of determining the exotic species from the two natives is to check the hairs which border the leaf-sheath. In the Hairy Commelina, the hairs are typically dark reddish-brown, whereas the native commelinas will always have white hairs.



Photo: Todd Burrows



Photo: Glenn Leiper

Above: Red-brown hairs on Hairy Commelina (exotic) leaf sheath versus white hairs on Blue Commelina (native) leaf sheath.

However, sometimes the hairs on the exotic species can be white like the native species, so using other distinguishing features can help to confirm your identification. Checking the flowers of each, in particular the petal sizes has significant implications about which species you are looking at. In the native commelinas, the flower petals are all equal-sized, compared to the exotic Hairy Commelina, who's upper two petals are the same size, but the lower petal is much smaller.



Photo: Todd Burrows



Photo: Glenn Leiper

Above: Lower petal reduced on Hairy Commelina (exotic) flower versus equal lower petal size on Blue Commelina (native) flower.

Wandering Jew (*Tradescantia fluminensis*) is native to South America. It appears similar to commelinas with succulent stems and leaves and, a creeping habit. It is commonly used in gardens as a groundcover given its ability to easily establish, even in shady areas. Unfortunately, this garden ornamental is another example of a garden plant which has "jumped the fence" and invaded subtropical and temperate rainforests (particularly along streams and gullies); establishing itself as a major environmental weed. In North Queensland, infestations up to 1 metre deep have even been found, alluding to its ability to out-compete and potentially smother native vegetation.



Photo: M Thomas

Above: Blue Commelina (native) habit



Photo: Brisbane City Council

Above: Wandering Jew (exotic) habit and flower

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Weed feature continued...

Leaves of the Wandering Jew are oval, dark green and shiny, with parallel veins covered in small hairs. The flowers are white (*this is one key in determining commelina or wandering jew*), and contain three-petals with yellow tipped stamens, roughly 2cm across. Wandering jew does not produce seed, instead reproducing vegetatively.

The Silver Striped Wandering Jew (*Tradescantia zebrina*) is another exotic of the same genus which is present in our region. The discerning feature of this species is the stiped purple-green leaves with two distinct silvery stripes running longitudinally along the leaf, and a dark purple colour below the leaf.

In summary, to help determine the species, remember to check:

- hairs on the leaf sheath (for commelinas): red/brown (exotic), white (native)
- petal sizes: small lower petal (exotic), even size petals (native)
- flower colour: blue for commelina, white for wandering jew



Information sourced from: Brisbane city council. (n.d.). Weed Identification Tool. Retrieved from: <https://weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au/weeds/hairy-commelinaa>; <https://weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au/weeds/zebrina>; <https://weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au/weeds/zebrina>

Land for Wildlife Property Profile: Jaimon Boarding Kennel and Cattery

One of our latest members to the Land for Wildlife program is Jaimon Boarding Kennel and Cattery. This property contributes 4.6 hectares to the 21,772 hectares of retained habitat under the Land for Wildlife Program within the Mackay Regional Council area, a welcome edition.

Jaimon Boarding Kennel and Cattery was established back in 1960, meaning they have seen many of the changes that the Sarina Catchment has experienced in the past decades. This property is a perfect example of utilising a block of land for both residential and commercial use, while still integrating nature conservation practices.

All animals are kept in facilities which don't interfere with the native vegetation and native wildlife which frequent the property. This not only ensures the protection of the wildlife, but also the dogs and cats who, if were allowed into the remnant vegetation, could come across predators and parasites, such as snakes and ticks.

The owners, Wendy and Rob and their daughter Kate have been working to reduce weed populations on the property (in particular, Lantana). During the LfW property visit, our Project Officer Morgan was able to identify other plants on the property to help prioritise future works that will strengthen the health of their patch of remnant vegetation.

The property is an extremely valuable additional to the Land for Wildlife Program because of its position in the landscape. The property encompasses a patch of remnant vegetation that acts as a stepping stone for wildlife moving across the landscape; providing food, water, nesting opportunities and protection from predators etc.

During the property visit, Morgan spotted a plethora of birds, including the olive-backed sunbird (*Cinnyris jugularis*), black faced cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina novaehollandiae*), rainbow lorikeets (*Trichoglossus moluccanus*), and red-tailed black cockatoos, who were utilising the flowering plants and fruit of the property. A lace monitor (*Varanus varius*) was also encountered, foraging through the leaf litter.

Wendy recalled having a wedge tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*) nest in the tall trees on the hills of the property, in 2020. She had the privilege of watching the adult wedge tailed eagle teach the chick to fly down the slopes of the hills before leaving the nest. This is a good example that demonstrates the benefits of retaining old, mature trees. Wedge tailed eagles build their nests in a prominent location (usually the tallest tree) with a good view of the surrounding landscape. When the tall trees have been removed, they are forced to nest closer to the ground, making them more susceptible to predators.



Remnant vegetation, showing tall mature trees rising above the canopy

It is also often the old, mature trees which have tree hollows (utilised by a range of wildlife for nesting and shelter). Tree hollows can take a long time to form, for example small hollows take roughly 100 years to form, medium sized hollows taking 200 years to form, and the larger and deeper hollows (e.g. those used by black cockatoos) can take even longer!

We welcome Wendy and Rob to the LfW program and look forward to hearing about the wonderful wildlife they continue to see on their property.



Above: Views from the property and stands of remnant vegetation

Dalrymple Bay — Revegetation project

SLCMA's revegetation team had the pleasure of completing a revegetation project in the grounds of Dalrymple Bay, recently. The revegetation occurred along a bundwall inside the terminal. The revegetation site can be seen from Hay Point road so make sure you keep your eyes open for the planting site, next time you're driving down Hay Point Road.

In total, 365 native plants were planted, each with plant guard kits installed to help protect the plants while they establish. The plant guard kits include jute weed mat, cardboard guard, bamboo stakes and a 12 month slow-release native fertiliser.

Plant selection was guided by the characteristics of the site (including the close proximity to overhead powerlines) and goals of the site (to establish cover throughout the site, enhance native biodiversity and visual amenity). Some notable native plants utilised were Matt rush (*Lomandra hystrix*), Yellow rattlepod (*Crotalaria mitchellii*), Tie bush (*Wikstroemia indica*), Sims wattle (*Acacia simsii*), Native hibiscus (*Hibiscus heterophyllus*) and Native holly (*Alchornia ilicifolia*). All of the plants used, have flowers that will attract a variety of birds, butterflies and bees to the area.

We look forward to seeing the plants grow and site flourish! Thank you to Dalrymple Bay for engaging us in the project and our Revegetation Team for their hard yakka!



Above: Planting on the slopes with plant guard kits.



Photos: AlCampbell

Above: Planting along the bund wall with plant guard kits installed on all plants.

Sarina Community Nursery Volunteer Program

Thank you to the volunteers for continuing to give your support to the SLCMA Community Nursery. It is so great to have such an awesome group, lending a helping hand and providing some much-needed company to the Nursery Officer. We have cleaned and sown a lot of seed this month as we try to make the most of the heat and humidity while it lasts, to try to encourage a fast germination rate. Hopefully, we will have a lot of potting-on to do shortly. We have begun preparing a garden around the *Lophostemon* tree in front of the nursery entrance. Mick, Pete and Neil have spread a deep layer of mulch which will smother the weeds in preparation for planting soon. So, we will be able to showcase some smaller species from the nursery which are suited to the home garden.

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.



Photo: S Tomlinson

Volunteers enjoying their time with friends and the plants

SLCMA Working Bee's



Keep an eye out on our Facebook page and in upcoming newsletters for dates of our working bees. SLCMA is planning to run a variety of different working bees across the catchment in the coming months. This will provide an opportunity for interested community members to upskill and get involved in landcare activities such as rubbish collections, weeding natural areas, plant identification, seed collection and creating seed bombs.

If you would like to be involved, please contact us to express your interest. We hope to see you soon!

Local Fauna Spotlight: Ulysses Butterfly (*Papilio ulysses*)

One of the most recognizable butterflies of our region has to be the remarkable Ulysses Butterfly (*Papilio ulysses*), also known as the Mountain Blue Butterfly or Blue Emperor. The name Ulysses is actually the Roman name for the Greek hero, Odysseus, whom the butterfly was named after. The Ulysses is a swallowtail butterfly (butterflies in the Papilioninae family), meaning it displays the characteristic tail-like extensions of its hindwings. Considered to be one of the more elusive butterflies, the Ulysses is found in most tropical rainforests in north-eastern Australia, New Guinea, the Moluccas and north-western Solomon Islands.

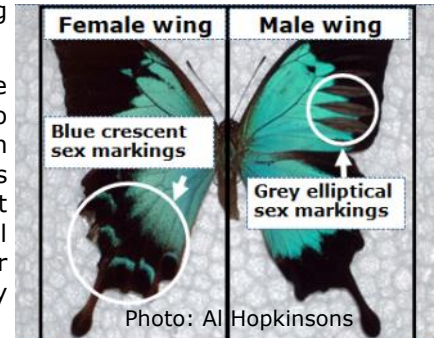


Photo: Renee Cremen

Above: *Ulysses* caterpillar

The butterfly begins its life as a yellowish-green caterpillar with soft spikes on the back of each of its segments. Black marks are also present on the thorax and part way along the back of the abdomen, with a pair of spikes on its tail. As the caterpillar matures it begins to turn more consistently green, with a pair of white spots halfway down its back, yellow markings along each side, a yellow and white bar across the thorax, the same tail spikes as the younger versions, and black markings on its face. As it continues to age, the spikes along the back are lost, as are the yellow markings. The mature caterpillar retains one or more pairs of white spots, the spikes on the tail and the white bar along its thorax, with its legs also now turning becoming white before turning into a pupa (roughly 4cm long).

The mature adult butterfly has a wingspan of roughly 10cm, with the upside of the wings displaying the characteristic iridescent electric blue it is so commonly known for. The bright colouring is due to the microscopic scales on the butterfly's wings, named "structural colouring". The different structures on the scales (e.g. ridges) causes the light that hits the surface to diffract and interfere and interact with the other light wavelengths which can cancel out certain colour wavelengths, and also intensify and reflect other colour wavelengths. The underside of the wings are a duller black or more likely brown.



Males and females differ slightly in that the females have small iridescent crescents on the bottom of the upside sections of her hindwings. Males also have the more extensive blue patches and distinctive dark grey elliptical sex markings on the forewing.

The eyes of the adult Ulysses also contain thousands of lenses, allowing them to see blue objects up to 30m away, which can lead to males misidentifying blue objects as females. They also have green blood, can taste through their feet, and smell through their antennae.

The *Euodia Melicope elleryana* (local native tree) and Little *Euodia Melicope rubra* (Australian native shrub) are host plants for the beautiful Ulysses Butterfly. We currently have tubestock of *Euodia* in our nursery, with the Little *Euodia* soon to be ready for purchase too.

Information sourced from: <http://lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au/papi/ulysses.html>

SLCMA Community Nursery 'Plant of the Month'

This month's 'Plant of the Month' is the **Silver Bush/Bean** (*Sophora tomentosa*). **Family:** Fabaceae

What is in a name? *Sophora* comes from the Arabic *sofaira*, meaning yellow, referring to the flowers of the shrub. *Tomentum* meaning wool, hair, feathers, likely referring to the furry covering of felt-like hairs on most of the plant.

Form: Tall shrub with an overall greyish green hue.

Leaves: Pinnate, with 9 to 19 ovate leaflets, dense felt-like covering of hairs on both surfaces.

Flower: Terminal racemes of bright, yellow, showy yellow pea-flowers. Flowering typically occurs between December to July.

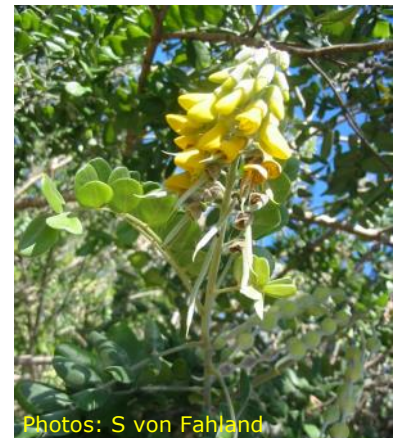
Fruit: Pods long, narrow, pendulous, grey, deeply constricted between seeds. Fruits between May to January.

Habitat: Coastal strand or foredunes.

Distribution: QLD, NSW and NT.

Notes: This species is considered endangered in NSW due to exotic species competition, vegetation clearing and recreational use of beach and foredunes causing disturbance.

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.



Photos: S von Fahland

Above: Flowers of silver bean



Above: Seed pods and leaves of sil-

Information sourced from: Melzer and Plumb (2007) *Plants of Capricornia*.



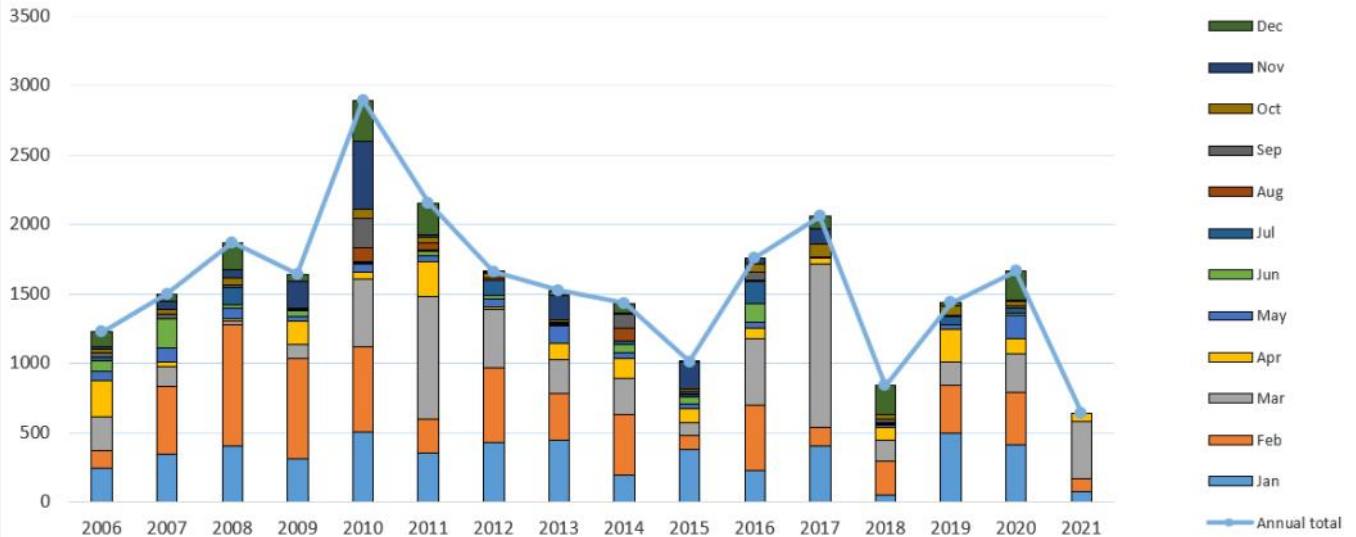
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What SLCMA Membership does for you !

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 makes some plants better at math than others?

Square roots!

What do plants do when they first meet each other?

They in-tree-duce themselves!

Vandals damaged a lot of plants at the local garden centre with herbicide.

Police are trying to Roundup the suspects...

Two cows are grazing on the meadow. One of them seems worried.

The 1st cow asks: "Aren't you worried, with these stories about mad cow disease being back etc?"

The 2nd cow laughs and replies "HA why would I care? I'm a sheep!"



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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