

SLCMA Catchment News 2025



March

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Sarina, QLD, 4737

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Email:

admin@sarinalandcare.org.au

Office hours:

Mon/Wed: 9am-4pm

Tue/Thu: 9am-3pm

Fri: 9am-3.30pm

Please phone ahead to
confirm availability,
just in case we are out
on a project or meeting.

Staff

Coordinator

Saskia von Fahland

Administration Officer

Helen Dangerfield

Project Officer

Rodney Fraser

Nursery Officer/

Field Supervisor

Susie Tomlinson

Field Team Leader

Dominique Jooste

Field Team

Adrian Brooks

Call us for information:

- ◇ Weed management
- ◇ Plant identification
- ◇ Land management
- ◇ Land for Wildlife

Volunteer opportunities:

SLCMA Community
Volunteer Program,
Wednesday, 9-12 noon.
Thursday, 2-5pm.

Native plants available for
purchase \$3.30 each. Visit
[website](http://www.sarinalandcare.org.au) for latest plant order
form.

SLCMA Executive 24/25

Chair: Lachlan McBride

Vice-chair: Malcolm Warfield

Treasurer: Susan Andrews

Secretary:

Karen May

Executive

member:

Kath De Vita



Sarina News!

Our team recently attended a **Flora Survey Training Workshop** with the **Queensland Threatened Plant Network (QTPN)**, gaining hands-on experience and valuable insights into plant conservation.

The workshop covered essential topics, including:

- **Establishing a Plant Profile** – Identifying and documenting plant species.
- **Essential Survey Information** – Key data to collect during surveys.
- **Field-Based Tools** – Useful equipment for accurate data collection.
- **Permit Requirements** – When and why permits are needed.
- **Conservation Applications** – Using data to protect threatened plants.

Thank you to **Pioneer Catchment Landcare** for organising this insightful workshop and **QTPN** for sharing their expertise. We're excited to apply these new skills to support plant conservation!



Photo: PCL

Attendees at the Flora Survey Training Workshop

Melioidosis: What you need to know and how to stay safe

Melioidosis is a rare tropical disease caused by *Burkholderia pseudomallei* bacteria, found in soil and water in Southeast Asia, northern Australia, and occasionally South Queensland. It's most common during the wet season after heavy rain or flooding. The number of patients with the life-threatening bacterial infection melioidosis has increased to 41 in North Queensland this year after the recent wet weather, including 27 cases in Cairns, 11 in Townsville and 3 in Mackay. Tragically, there have been two deaths.

Symptoms: Melioidosis can appear 1 to 21 days after exposure and may include: Fever, cough and difficulty breathing (pneumonia), non-healing skin ulcers or sores. If untreated, the infection can lead to sepsis (blood poisoning) and even death. Early treatment is critical.

Who's at Risk? Those most at risk include:

- People with diabetes, cancer, or chronic lung/kidney disease
- Heavy alcohol drinkers
- Healthy adults and children rarely become ill from the bacteria.

Transmission: The bacteria spread through: skin—cuts or sores from contaminated soil or water, breathing in dust or droplets and drinking contaminated water. It does not spread from person to person or animals.

Prevention: To reduce risk, especially in North Queensland during the wet season:

- Avoid soil or muddy water, especially after heavy rain
- Wear waterproof footwear and gloves for outdoor work
- Protect open wounds with waterproof dressings
- Wash thoroughly after potential exposure

Treatment: Melioidosis is treated with strong antibiotics for at least three months, and severe cases may require hospitalization. Prompt medical care is essential to avoid complications. Although melioidosis is rare, it can be life-threatening for those at higher risk. Early treatment is essential for recovery.

Need Help? For more information, contact your doctor, local health centre, or call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) anytime, 24/7. [Stay informed](http://www.qld.gov.au/health/condition/infections-and-parasites/bacterial-infections/melioidosis) and stay safe!

Information sourced from: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/condition/infections-and-parasites/bacterial-infections/melioidosis>

SLCMA 'Plant of the Month'

This month's 'Plant of the Month' is Rusty Pittosporum

Pittosporum ferrugineum

Family: Pittosporaceae

What is in a name? The species epithet *ferrugineum* is from the Latin *ferrugineus*, meaning "of the colour of rust", and was given to this species by Aiton in reference to the dense red-brown hairs on the plant.

Form: Shrub or small tree growing to around 10m high

Leaves: Dull green, elliptic to narrow-elliptic, 6–13cm by 2–5cm.

Flower: Clusters of flowers about 4cm wide, are produced in the leaf axils throughout the year. The fragrant flowers have five petals, 10mm lx 10mm; white, cream or yellow.

Fruit: Dull yellow or orange fruit is a dehiscent 2-valved capsule containing up to 16 small red seeds aggregated into a sticky ball.

Distribution: This species is known to inhabit drier rainforest types such as monsoon forest, beach forest and the margins of mangrove forest from Malaysia to North Queensland.

Notes: The fruit of this species is eaten by metallic starlings (*Aplonis metallica*). Flowers and fruit attract a variety of birds, butterflies and moths.

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 \$3.30 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: <https://bie.ala.org.au/species/https://id.biodiversity.org.au/taxon/apni/51442348>



Photo: ryanthughes- bie.ala.org.au

Form—showing dense canopy of Rusty Pittosporum



Photo: S von Fahland

Ripe seed capsule opening to show red sticky seed



Photo: S von Fahland

Leaves

Sarina Community Nursery Volunteer Program

Despite the wet weather, our dedicated volunteers have put on their gumboots, grabbed their umbrellas, and joined us for our regular nursery sessions. While the rain kept us from heading out on a seed collection trip this month, we've made the most of our time in the nursery —potting seedlings, weeding, cleaning seeds, and washing pots, all while enjoying some great conversations.

Exciting news! We've added a second regular volunteer event on **Thursdays from 2–5pm**, giving even more opportunities for the community to get involved. Whether you're passionate about plants or just keen to lend a hand, we'd love to see you there. If you're completing volunteer work as part of your Centrelink mutual obligations, we welcome you to join us. Come along, meet like-minded people, and help nurture our local environment!

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 days, now every Wednesday, 9am to 12noon and Thursday, 2pm to 5pm. For more details contact SLCMA on 4956 1388. SLCMA Community Volunteer Program is proudly supported by Mackay Regional Council, Natural Environment Levy.



Volunteers heading for morning tea!



Photos: S Tomlinson

Look out, look out there are snakes about...

Snakes play an important role in maintaining the natural environment. Along with other reptiles, they make up a significant proportion of the middle-order predators that keep natural ecosystems working. Without them, the numbers of prey species would increase to unnatural levels and the predators that eat snakes would struggle to find food. Snakes are protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and it is an offence to kill, injure or take snakes from the wild.

If you encounter a snake, don't panic. Back away to a safe distance and allow the snake to move away. Snakes often want to escape when disturbed but, if they feel threatened, they can become defensive. Most snake bites are received by people who try to capture or kill a snake. When left alone, snakes present little or no danger to people. To find out more about snake safety and first aid for snake bites [click here](#).

The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation has put together a great guide with photos, links and more information on how to identifying snake species in Central Queensland ([click here](#)) <https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/snakes/near-you/central-qld>

High-risk pathways for high-risk ornamentals

A routine search for [high-risk cacti](#) (Opuntoid cacti) has uncovered a species previously not reported in Australia. Biosecurity Officer Sina Leis (fig. 1) thought she had found a violet prickly pear (*Opuntia gosseliniana*), a prohibited species, being sold in the Mackay region through Facebook Marketplace. However, the specimen was identified by the Queensland Herbarium as *Opuntia macrocentra* (long-spined prickly pear; fig. 2), which looks similar to violet prickly pear but has long black spines and larger cladodes (flattened, paddle-shaped stems of *Opuntia* species).

All Opuntoid cacti (*Opuntia*, *Cylindropuntia* and *Austrocylindropuntia* spp.) are prohibited or restricted in Queensland, except Indian fig (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) which is grown for its edible fruit and is allowed to be kept, although it occasionally naturalises (reproduces outside of cultivation). Disappointingly, Opuntoid cacti are popular with collectors and are among the most commonly detected prohibited and restricted plants. For more on one of the most popular cactus species, the bunny ears cactus (*Opuntia microdasys*), see the *Have you seen these weeds* section below.

Opuntoid cacti, along with non-native acacia (*Vachellia*, *Acaciella* and *Senegalia* spp.), [horsetails](#) (*Equisetum* spp.), [Kochia](#) (*Kochia scoparia*) and [Red Sesbania](#) (*Sesbania punicea*) are the targets of a surveillance campaign being undertaken by Biosecurity Queensland in the Central Region to detect high-risk (prohibited and restricted) ornamental plants. Detecting high-risk invasives while they are still in cultivation is true early detection. Targeted searches improve the probability of early detection, reducing the likelihood of establishment at further sites and improving the probability of successful eradication. Population centres are key pathways for high-risk

ornamentals to escape into the environment, including propagation and/or sale by plant collectors and gardeners who may or may not be aware of the risk their plants pose to our native ecosystems and agricultural systems. Since July 2024, 22 detections of high-risk ornamentals have been made in the Central Region, resulting in the destruction of 36 plants, including [cha-om](#) (*Senegalia insuavis*), [Opuntoid cacti](#), [water mimosa](#) (*Neptunia plena*) and [madras thorn](#) (*Pithecellobium dulce*).

How can you help? Weed Spotters can keep an eye out for high-risk (prohibited and restricted) ornamental plants, including Opuntoid cacti, being sold online or in markets, grown in gardens, or illegally dumped. If you suspect you have seen a plant of concern, please do not approach the seller/grower, instead send photos or screenshots to your Weed Spotters [regional coordinator](#) or contact Biosecurity Queensland on **13 25 23** or [online](#).

Acknowledgments: article taken from Weed spotters Bulletin March 2025, Sina Leis, Biosecurity Queensland.

Join the Land for Wildlife program

The Land for Wildlife (LfW) program is a free, voluntary program that aims to support, encourage, and recognise landholders who integrate wildlife conservation with their land management activities. By protecting the natural biodiversity of your land, you can provide a wide variety of habitats for native wildlife. The retention of habitat for native wildlife can play a major role in sustainable land management.

The Land for Wildlife program has no legislative requirements, does not change the legal status of your property, will not change how you manage your property and you can opt out whenever you like. It is purely to help landholders learn about how to care for and protect the native plants, animals and ecosystems on their own property.

There are some eligibility requirements for the program which include: the property must be located in the Mackay Regional Council area, is larger than 1 hectare, and has some areas of intact native vegetation.

The Land for Wildlife Program, offers landholders a variety of **FREE** benefits including:

- A property visit from our Project Officer, including habitat assessment and discussion of property goals.
- Plant identification and advice (both native and exotic plants), threatened species, ecosystems, and their management.
- Personalised Land Management Plan to provide further information targeted at your specific property goals.
- 20 free native plants annually
- Opportunity for property re-visit, as needed. This is handy if you would like follow-up advice or to discuss changes to your property overtime.
- Receive quarterly newsletter and invitations to workshops, field days and opportunities to meet other like-minded landholders.
- A Land for Wildlife sign for your property to acknowledge your efforts in wildlife conservation.

There are only a few spaces available each year.

If you are interested, please complete and return the Expression of Interest Form (found on our website www.sarinalandcare.org.au) to admin@sarinalandcare.org.au, or call the SLCMA Office on 4956 1388. The Land for Wildlife Program is supported by Mackay Regional Council Natural Environment Levy.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



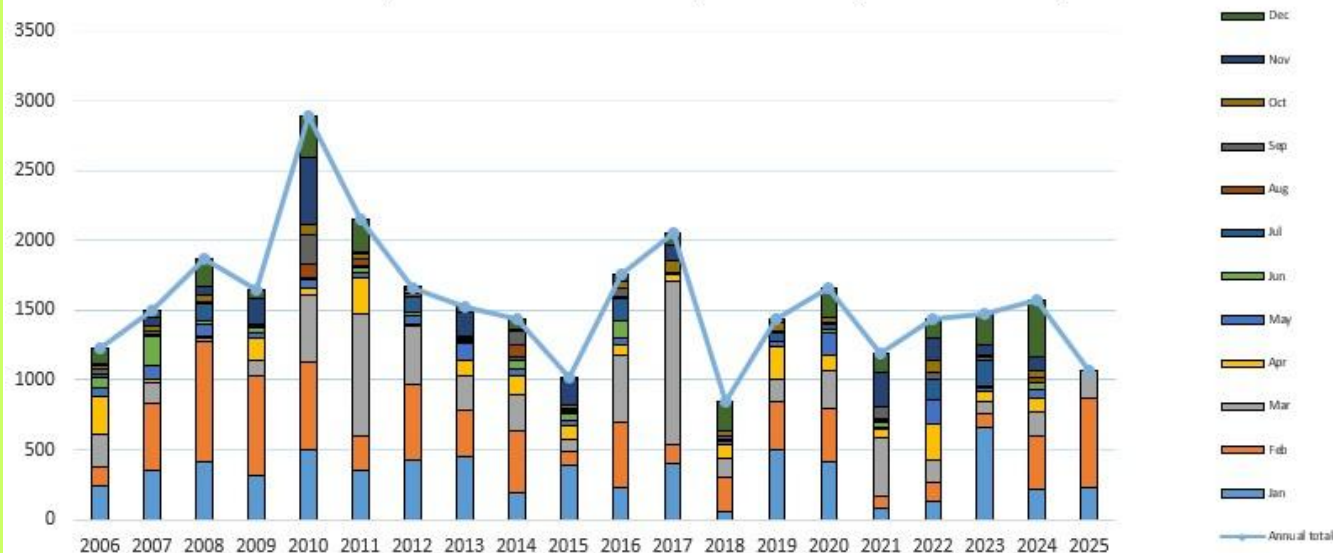
Address: 101 Sarina Beach Rd, Sarina QLD 4737
Phone: (07) 4956 1388
Website:
www.sarinalandcare.org.au
Email:
admin@sarinalandcare.org.au

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 -2025 (inc. annual total)



Please consider donating your Containers for Change to SLCMA. You can quote SLCMA's Scheme ID#C10002138 when you deposit your eligible containers **or**, you can drop your containers to us. It is a great way to help the environment and the community. You can reduce waste, save energy, and contribute to local environment projects and programs.



SLCMA's Scheme ID
C10002138



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

Just for fun!

Q: Why are trees so good at networking?
A: Because they're constantly branching out.

Q: Why do flowers always drive so fast?
A: Because they put the petal to the metal.

Q: What did the bee say to the plant after telling it a joke?
A: I'm just pollen your leg.



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