

# MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

[www.moggillcreek.org.au](http://www.moggillcreek.org.au)



## NEWSLETTER

Summer 2006



Photo: Les Hall

◀ Common but rarely seen (see Gould's long-eared bat p. 7)

Small effort, big result (see Bushcare, p. 7) ▶



Photo: Graeme Wilson



◀ Our logo in real life.

Photo: Grahame Clarke

# Editorial

*Was it because of or in spite of the dry conditions? In over 50 years of living in this catchment I can not recall such a heavy flowering of so many of our native trees and shrubs. If it was caused by the drought we don't want that to continue but at least continuing efforts in the Bushcare program-which is restoring native vegetation along roadsides along which we all pass- will ensure that we can enjoy the seasonal flowering, at whatever level it occurs.*

*Our hands-on efforts focus almost entirely on restoring and preserving native vegetation, but our success in doing so will be expressed also in the abundance and diversity of wildlife; and this is clearly a matter of great interest to our members. It is reflected in the amount of material being submitted to this Newsletter. The last issue had a complaint about the removal of the exotic minor weed Wild Tobacco, whose fruit is a valuable food for a number of bird species in the absence of more abundant native-plant food which is inadequately represented as a result of clearing activities, and which we are attempting to redress. In a similar vein we now have advice (elsewhere in this issue) of the over-enthusiastic removal of another weed, to the detriment of possums. Another contributor reports his astonishment at a small shift of address bringing large numbers of birds in to his garden, where previously they were rarely seen. Yet another has provided a longer contribution about the abundant wildlife on her property in consequence the diversity of vegetation. This has a link with an earlier article on the dangers, to birds, of hand-feeding them, a subject which recurs in this issue in an article reporting life-in-the-raw in the bird world.*

*One message which runs through much of this- and it won't be the last time it has to be pointed out- is that if you want wildlife, you have to provide habitat and food.*

*And still on the subject of animals: p.1 carries a photograph of the head end of a water dragon (taken from this year's Photography Competition). It is a reminder that in contrast to the minimal representation of the animal as our logo, it is a quite beautiful creature.*

## Photography Competition

The Annual Photography Competition for 2006 was again a great success, thanks to Robyn Frost and her helpers. There was a good number of entries although low from Young Photographers, while the quality of photographs was high. Space does not allow a listing of prize winners. The Supreme Exhibit went to Glen Flower while Reuben Dutton won in three categories for Young Photographers. The event is possible only because of the support of many sponsors, providing cash, vouchers, goods or free services and we are most grateful to them. They were: *Blazing Star, Brookfield Produce and Pet Pavilion, Café Bliss, Centenary Hire, Gunn Family, Hampton Gardens, L.J.Hooker, Kenmore Centre for Health, Kenmore Fruit Bowl, Kenmore Veterinary Surgery, Kenmore Village Management, Kodak Express, M&R Consultants, Moggill Constructions, Orrum Jewellers, Pool Mart, The Print Shoppe, Signature Real Estate, Water Solutions, Cr. Margaret de Wit and Dr. Bruce Flegg.*

Included in this year's Riverfest Festival was a GoA sponsored competition open to school children to produce a Billboard (large poster) with an environment protection theme, the winning entry from each Catchment Management area to be placed in an appropriate public place. The entry by Thomas Herbert of Upper Brookfield State School won for this area and was on display at Indooroopilly Railway Station. Congratulations to Thomas and our thanks to his school for its ongoing interest in our objectives.

Moggill Creek Catchment Group is a volunteer action group aiming to conserve and improve the natural environment of its catchment on both private and public land.

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Secretary: Gaynor Johnson

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## Chairman's Report

The year 2006 has been just as busy as previous years for the Moggill Creek Catchment Group. We have maintained our focus on revegetation on both public and private land and we are proud to announce our current membership of 350 members.

Early in the year Greg Siepen joined us as our coordinator. Greg has a long background in environmental work, and he soon got stuck in to seeking funding for various activities as well as on-ground work at the Nursery and revegetation sites.

Our Nursery continues to be a major activity and we gave away 10,414 plants up to the end of October this year. About 17% of these went to our neighbours in the Pullen Pullen Catchments Group and PPCG volunteers also give valuable help at the Nursery – a much appreciated symbiosis.

Habitat Brisbane-supported Bushcare Groups continue to do good work. The outstanding group is Huntington, led by Malcolm Frost – they contributed 857 hours work over the last ten months, planting 2,374 plants. Damien Egan has now taken over the Showgrounds Bushcare Group – this is a focal site in our district and we are looking forward to building up this team and really improving the Creek area in the vicinity of the Showgrounds.

Promoting and publicising our environmental aims, landcare and so forth, is critical to our success and has been ably managed by Chris Hosking. As well as 11 newspaper articles we have had two television appearances (in relation to Birdwing Butterflies and Mountain Bikes) and a radio interview. Promotional activities have included two exhibits and our traditional Photography Competition at Kenmore Village, each being staged for several days, our 'Life in a Creek' day in June, which was attended by as many as 200, and a very busy appearance at BCC's Green Garden Day.

A new initiative has been to produce our own Prospectus, as an aid to applying for grants for special projects. This beautiful document has been designed for us by Andrew Ness and Mardi Fielding and is sure to bring us benefits. It was launched at our AGM, held on 15 November. Thank you very much Andrew and Mardi.

There has been a strong move for us to develop a species list of plants in our Catchment. The Queensland Herbarium has generously provided us with available information from its 'HerbRecs' database free of charge. This information will form the basis for our further botanical research.

Thanks to John Gower, our newsletter now includes two pages in full colour. While this does add to the cost of production, I am sure you will all agree that the result is a much more attractive and useful publication.

At our AGM, I tabled a letter received the previous day from the Lord Mayor, offering us the use, as a home base, of the Caretaker's Cottage at Gold Creek Dam, just above the nursery. This is a wonderful opportunity and we will need to consider carefully how we proceed from here.

In conclusion I would like to thank the many people, both within and outside the Committee, who have contributed to making 2006 another successful year.

*Bryan Hacker  
Chairman*

## You said -----

*(The two following items have been edited down because of space limitation.)*

Vic Ziolkowski of Haven Rd has moved a mere two km. in a straight line along the same hills from a former address where he rarely saw birds of interest. Now he sees many species and has provided a list which has been passed on to one of our members with a particular knowledge of our birds. Anyone with the slightest interest would, on seeing the two addresses, have the explanation. It is yet another example of a general problem referred to in our Editorial.

In our last issue of this newsletter, under the same heading, a member wrote in about the mistake of overzealous removal of the exotic Wild Tobacco. This plant is, in the absence of sufficient natives (numbers of species and plants) to provide adequate food for many birds, filling the gap until we can replace suitable vegetation. Now we have a plea of the same kind from Jean Goodwin of Queensland Native Animal Care. Pepper Berry (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) has taken over on a large scale from original vegetation along creek banks and in parks, and its foliage has become an important substitute food for possums. A Council eradication program has resulted in starvation and death of the animals. A plea is made for an informed, gradual replacement of the Pepper Berry with suitable natives.

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In answer to Bryan Hacker's query in the last newsletter about where Madiera Vine came from, it was popular as a hanging basket in the 50's. Everyone had one because of its lovely chains of perfumed flowers, and because it was so easy to grow and look after. Everyone loved it until it started to outgrow the basket and then the lot got tossed over the back fence. The nursery industry sold millions of them in plastic baskets with little built-in ladders for it to grow up, and then cascade down in veils of vine and flowers.

*Rob Waller*

## Death of an Eastern Yellow Robin

On Monday 16th of October a group of members working at the plant nursery were horrified to see a kookaburra with an adult Eastern Yellow-robin firmly clasped in its beak. It flew away and was later observed sitting in a tree with two other kookaburras, one of which was a juvenile. The kookaburra chomped on the robin's carcass, passing it backwards and forwards through its bill for a few minutes, obviously crunching it up in preparation for swallowing.

It is natural for some birds to eat others; there always have been the hunted and the hunter. Such predatory birds are common in our region and include Kookaburras, Grey and Pied Butcherbirds, Magpies, Currawongs and Crows. Besides eating adults they also prey on eggs, nestlings and fledglings. The list of victims is extensive; some species occurring in our area are Brown Quail, Painted Buttonquail, Black Duck, Grey Teal, Emerald Dove, Kookaburra (ironic), Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Striated Pardalote, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Bell Miner, Brown Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Willie Wagtail, Magpie Lark (peewee), Red-browed Finch, Double-barred Finch, Richards Pipit and Silvereye.

This behaviour evolved along with the birds over millions of years and had probably attained a state of equilibrium between prey and predator. However along came *Homo sapiens* who proceeded to destroy this balance of nature. Many people can not resist feeding friendly Magpies, Kookaburras and Butcherbirds which are then able to build up artificially large populations that require more food, a large proportion of which is taken in the wild and includes birds, reptiles and small mammals as well as invertebrates.

A common lament one hears is "There just doesn't seem to be the number of small birds around". There are probably several reasons for this; destruction of habitat and feral animals as well as man feeding the predators.

Dawn Beck

## Avoidance of Inbreeding – A Case Study

Most flowering plants have both male and female parts in the one flower, which predisposes to self-pollination and this in turn to inbreeding which is detrimental. Various mechanisms have developed to prevent or minimize this, one being the separation in time of availability of pollen and its access to the female structures. An example is seen in *Eupomatia* (of which there are three species –two occurring here- in this only genus in a very primitive Family. The photo on p 5 shows the flower of *E. bennettii*.

All mature flowers on a plant open simultaneously very early in the morning. A cap comprising fused sepals and petals is shed, revealing what appears to be numerous petals but are in fact staminoides, strongly modified sterile stamens attached to the apical part of the stem, in the centre of which are embedded the female reproductive structures. Anther (and pollen) bearing structures occur on the outer modified stamens.

The inner staminoides which have been folded over the female structures open out (as in the photo), emitting a strong odour which attracts a particular species of small beetle. These beetles feed on some of the plant material, mate and lay eggs there. They are also carrying pollen which stuck to them during the previous day's activities and is now transferred to the female parts, resulting in pollination. Soon after, those inner staminoides close over again, preventing pollination from further beetle activity. The outer staminoides now open out, revealing the anthers. The beetles move out there continuing as before and picking up pollen. Later in the day the entire mass of staminoides and anthers is shed, falling to the ground and carrying beetles and their eggs. While the female parts are now exposed to marauding beetles, they are no longer receptive to pollen. After a couple of days the eggs hatch with the larvae feeding on the remains of the fallen flower parts until they pupate in the soil.

The process does allow some self-pollination if a beetle comes back to a new flower on the same plant next day but for the greater part some new beetles carrying pollen from elsewhere will be involved.

Graeme Wilson

## Plant Families 10 – Lauraceae

The Lauraceae is a fairly large family of plants with more than 2000 species in over 30 genera worldwide. It takes its name from the genus *Laurus*, the Mediterranean Laurel (*L. nobilis*) being a famous plant of antiquity. It was regarded as sacred and provided laurel wreaths, but has fallen in to more prosaic use in the kitchen where bay leaves have a place. Well known economic members of the family are Avocado (*Persea americana*), *Cinnamomum zeylandica* (providing cinnamon) and *C. camphora* (camphor); although the last has become a serious pest here.

Coming to our local vegetation, *Cryptocarya* is well represented with a number of species; *bidwillii* (yellow laurel), *microneura* (murrogen), *obovata* (pepperberry), *triplinervis* (three veined laurel), *sclerophylla* and *laevigata* (glossy laurel). Also there are *Litsea reticulata* (perhaps confined to wet rainforest situations) and *Neolitsea dealbata*.

Graeme Wilson





Photo: Glen Leiper

◀ An elaborate mechanism (see Avoidance of Inbreeding - A Case Study p. 4)



▲ *Tithonia diversifolia* (see Daisies Large and Small p. 6)

▲ *Calypocarpus vialis* (see Daisies Large and Small p. 6)



Photo: Graeme Wilson

▲ A fine tree (see Foam-bark - one of the pretiest of trees p. 7)

◀ Every picture tells a story (see Competition p. 6)

## Daisies Large and Small

Daisies are generally easily recognised as belonging to a single plant family. Flower heads range from the massive head of the commercial sunflower to some with tiny flower heads. Daisies are included in the plant family Asteraceae (after the garden plant 'Aster'). Of the 200 nastiest environmental weeds listed by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), 20 are in the daisy family and this family is only surpassed by the grass family (which has 36 weed species) in its contribution to environmental problems.

The worst of the weeds in the Asteraceae family is groundsel, which ranks No. 2, followed by bitou bush (no. 12) and Singapore daisy (No. 16). In this article I will just cover two species that are weedy in our Catchment, one large and one small. The large one is Mexican sunflower, *Tithonia diversifolia* which ranks No. 84 on the EPA list, and the small one goes by the name of creeping cinderella weed, *Calyptracarpus vialis*. This species does not appear on the EPA list at all.

Mexican sunflower (photo p 5) is a perennial somewhat bushy plant up to 3 m tall, with showy yellow flower heads up to 10 cm across appearing in spring and autumn. Leaves are alternate and lobed, hairy on both surfaces. Although the species is sometimes called Japanese sunflower, it is originally from Central America. In our area, Mexican sunflower seems to be only moderately common, occurring along roadsides and dampish areas. Googling the internet, I found reports that it appears to be allelopathic – that is, having an adverse effect on other plants, not through competition but rather through a chemical effect.

In contrast, creeping cinderella weed (photo p 5) is a herb with weak trailing stems to 60 cm long, sometimes rooting at the nodes, rarely ascending to more than 30 cm. Leaves are more or less triangular, opposite and sparsely hairy. Flower heads are 5-10 mm long but the 'petals' are just 1-3 mm long. Like its larger cousin, creeping cinderella weed is from Central America, also occurring in southern USA where it has apparently been planted as a groundcover. This species is quite common in our area and, despite its weak growth, is surprisingly difficult to control, competing remarkably well in a grassy woodland situation. Creeping cinderella weed is also noted as a weed in the USA and islands of the Pacific.

Bryan Hacker

## Competition

Much revegetation effort comprises interplanting among established trees, and many persons doing so are disappointed with the poor growth of the newcomers compared with that of those put in as isolated plants in other situations. The cause is usually the competitive advantages of the established trees.

Competition can be for various requirements. Most commonly it is for water, especially so here in normal rainfall seasons, but mineral nutrients and light are likely to be involved to some extent. There are also cases of some species inhibiting, chemically, others. As a general rule these difficulties can not be overcome and slow growth of the newcomers is to be tolerated. Provision of supplementary water and nutrients is not particularly effective because the established plants will use them. And remember that there is a plant population appropriate to any situation, so it is pointless hoping to exceed it.

The photo on p. 5 is of part of a single-line planting of *Syzygium floribundum* (previously *Waterhousea floribunda*) along a boundary fence in lower Gold Creek Rd. At the left hand end are trees which grew rapidly and luxuriantly in the absence of existing trees. As the planting approached a few eucalypts, vigour fell off and by the time it got in among some established trees, they are quite miserable looking. Further along (beyond the right hand side of the photo), some are now dying after the prolonged drought.

Graeme Wilson

## Volunteering in Australia – How do we measure up?

Reading *The Australian* the other day (4 October), the following heading caught my eye – *Aussies leave volunteering to retirees*. Being (a) a volunteer and (b) a retiree, I read on.

A research study has shown that overall Australians spend about half as much time volunteering as do the Canadians and the Brits. However, after retirement, Aussie men spend 15 and 42 minutes longer per day than the Canadians and the Brits respectively and retired Australian women volunteer longer hours too.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates the total value of welfare services provided in 2002-03 as \$49.5 billion. The article suggested that the comparatively low overall amount of volunteering in Australia could be due to the existence of 'more expensive government partnerships' in some overseas countries.

Coming back to our home catchment, we do pretty well on the extent of volunteering, but there is still room for improvement. Those who read this may consider whether perhaps they have a few more hours they can offer!!

Bryan Hacker



## Gould's Long-eared Bat

Gould's Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus gouldi*) is a small insectivorous bat that is common in the Upper Brookfield, Goldcreek area. (see photo p 1). It is very easy to identify because of its long ears. This bat is often found during the daytime resting in dark places such as under an old bag hanging in a shed, in clothing hanging on a verandah, under houses and in between gaps in exposed timber. The species will readily occupy bat boxes. In the wild it roosts under bark and in tree hollows. Sometimes it will use the same roost site for several weeks, but then be absent for long periods of time.

The bat weighs seven to ten grams and has a body size about the same as a house mouse. The fur is an olive-grey and is slightly paler on the belly. Ears are long (24-28 mm) and prominently ribbed. The ears can be folded down on the head when resting but are always erect when the bat is active or flying. Females give birth to twins in early summer.

Long-eared bats hunt for food along and in riparian vegetation and above swamps and dams, and around yards where animals are kept. They glean insects off leaves and will land on the ground to capture prey. They also feed around houses and orchards on insect pest species such as small moths, beetles and mosquitoes. Their flight is slow and jerky, low to the ground at 1-1.5 m. If you have a bat detector, their echo-location calls are a very faint sweep at 95-40 kHz.

Les Hall



Gould's long-eared bats

Photo: Les Hall

## Foam bark – one of the prettiest of trees

Foam bark (*Jagera pseudorhus*) is one of the prettiest trees in our catchment. After a few years, and when growing in an open situation, it forms a nicely rounded tree with a dense canopy and dark green foliage. It occurs naturally on rainforest margins and along creeks in our district and also occasionally in eucalypt woodland.

When I first came across the generic name *Jagera*, I thought it might be associated with the Jagera Aboriginal people, who used to live in our area. I have since been informed that the name is after the Dutch botanist Herbert de Jager, who collected plants from this genus in Indonesia three centuries ago. However, foambark was important to the Aboriginal people, the bark being used as a fish poison. The bark was also used as a foaming agent for beer in World War I.

Leaves are pinnate, with an even number (4-13 pairs) of slightly alternating leaflets up to about 10 cm long, with serrate margins. The tiny flowers appear in panicles from March to April, the densely hairy almost spherical brown fruit ripening early in spring and splitting open into three segments to reveal the small black seeds. (photo p 5)

If picking the fruit, be sure to wear gloves, as they are densely covered in irritant hairs. Foam bark is easily propagated from fresh seed. It is only a moderately quick grower, but is very hardy.

Bryan Hacker

## Bushcare

The photo on page 1 shows a beautiful flowering of Brisbane Wattle (*Acacia fimbriata*) along one of our roadsides in Spring, where a few years ago there was a mess of weeds and would still be so but for Bushcare.

Bushcare is a BCC program, in which we participate, for the restoration and maintenance of native vegetation on public land; mainly roadsides. The Council provides material support (plants, mulch, herbicides etc.) and we supply volunteer labour and the organization of working bees. We operate as independent groups corresponding with MCCG's geographically defined Sections.

Some of our Groups have made wonderful progress, e.g. Huntington (Section 3) and Upper Gold Creek (Section 9). The main limitation to progress is number of volunteers. Far more are wanted and this is an appeal to residents to join in, giving a little of their time in an enjoyable group activity which can have pleasing results. If interested, contact the Section Leader appropriate to your address. They are listed in the table of Committee Members etc. on page 8.

Graeme Wilson

## DO YOU ENJOY WORKING WITH COMPUTERS?

## DO YOU HAVE A FEW HOURS A MONTH TO SPARE?

The MCCG is in need of a volunteer to help with our website.

If this is of interest, please contact Bryan Hacker on 3374 1468 or Chris Hosking on 3374 3453.

## Feeding Wildlife-Naturally

That first cuppa for the morning, what bliss. But today, as I gazed out the kitchen window, the day was made perfect. A few metres away perched a magnificent Australian king parrot, gorging on the fresh seeds of the *Dodonea triquetra* (hop bush) planted a couple of years ago. They also love the nearby wattle seeds (*A. falcata*). Cheekily, a pale-headed rosella swooped in to land beside the king parrot to take his share of the bounty. The parrot, not liking the intrusion, flew to the next hop bush; there were plenty to share.

A pair of kookaburras breeds each year in the hollow of an ironbark, and the sacred kingfishers have returned to their hollow in the termite nest on another eucalypt.

Over summer, hill topping butterflies will visit the hardy butterfly garden planted with *Breynia oblongifolia*, *Pavetta australiensis*, *Themeda triandra*, *Scleria mackaviensis*, *Lomandra confertifolia* and *Lomandra longifolia* and flutter in the wattles and the mistletoes that hang on the eucalypts.

At night, the eucalypts around my house will have different visitors, including greater gliders, sugar gliders and brushtail possums. This winter they flowered prolifically and the flying foxes intrigued as they fed raucously nearby. Sometimes a red-necked wallaby can be heard thumping along underneath as it feeds on grasses after sheltering during the day in the native undergrowth in my gully.

Warmer weather sees the re-emergence of the native geckoes. The blotchy patterns of the robust velvet geckoes are distinctive, as is their silence (compared with the exotic Asian geckoes) as they wait for a moth to land within striking reach. The skinks too, are now busy scuttling amongst the leaf litter, rockeries and logs.

During winter the scarlet and Lewin's honeyeaters were spectacular regular visitors to the birdbath. Summer will bring a different array of thirsty birds.

How do I manage to enjoy all this wildlife? Simple! I provide them with native habitat, keep the cat indoors, and let it all happen...naturally.

Christine Hosking

## Reminder

Please report, for our records, both sightings and roadkills of our wildlife, especially the less common (species, location and date) to Chris Hosking.

Email: [cjmhosk@optusnet.com.au](mailto:cjmhosk@optusnet.com.au)

Phone: 3374 3453

## Urgent

It has been reported that much wildlife has been brought in suffering from dehydration because of the drying up of their usual water supplies. Please leave out containers of water for them. But do so in ways which minimize the danger of attacks by cats and dogs.

## Committee Members and Committee

Position	Section	Name	Phone
Chairman		Bryan Hacker	3374 1468
Vice-Chairman		Malcolm Frost	3374 0649
Secretary		Gaynor Johnson	3374 0803
Treasurer		Joanna Yesberg	3374 4703
Publicity		Chris Hosking	3374 3453
Nursery		Graeme Wilson	3374 1218
Coordinator		Greg Siepen	0408 774 631
Section 1	Pullenvale/Moons Lane	Richard Woodhead	3374 4691
Section 2	Lower Moggill Creek	Rob Waller	3378 9979
Section 3	Huntingdon	Malcolm Frost	3374 0649
Section 4	Showgrounds	Damien Egan	3378 5199
Section 5	Haven Road	Tina Heybroek	3374 1401
Section 6	Upper Brookfield	Daryl O'Brien	3374 4964
Section 7	Gold Creek Reserve	Tom McHugh	3407 0050
Section 8	Wonga Creek	Graeme Wilson	3374 1218
Section 9	Upper Gold Creek	Gordon Grigg	3374 1737
Section 10	Lower Gold Creek	Graeme Wilson	3374 1218
Section 11	McKay Brook	Bryan Hacker	3374 1468
Section 12	Gap Creek	Michael Humphreys	3374 1467
Section 13	Mt Coot-tha Reserve	Tom McHugh	3407 0050