

MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

www.moggillcreek.org.au



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NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2007



▲ Abrus precatorius (See p. 4) Photo: Bryan Hacker

◀ Bryan Hacker Citizen of the Year Award (See p. 8) Photo: BCC



◀ Expected acquisition (see p. 2)
Photo: Bryan Hacker

There is an
important notice on p 8

Editorial

Much material having been received for this issue leaves little space available under this heading. There are however three items of particular note here because they hint at increasingly diverse and interesting things happening. The possession of the Cottage (p 2) will provide a venue for events, displays and a base for activities by naturalists with various interests. The presence of the latter may well result in interesting observations and discoveries in the biologically rich area surrounding us, such as the rare bat recently found near by (p 3). Then there is the butterfly breeding house (p 7) under construction, which if successful, could be of great interest to the community at large. The consequence of such things would be good publicity for MCCG and its activities, and more varied content of this Newsletter.

Coordinator's Report

New Catchment Centre: The former Caretaker's Cottage is an exciting prospect for the Group to extend the range of learning activities for the community. It also gives the Group a 'home' to operate from, but we will have to form a Catchment Centre Management Committee and also form a Working Bee group to look after the building and develop the grounds with demonstration plantings. A five year lease from Council was applied for on 1st February. A visit to other Brisbane catchment centres is being planned to see how they operate. Contact me if you are interested in helping in any way.

Horse Management Workshops: Two workshops are being held in March to help landholders manage their horses on their properties and reduce environmental impacts. These workshops are being arranged with Brookfield Pony Club and Equestrian Club. W/S 1: Brookfield Hall on Tues 13th (Part 1) and Wed 14th (Part 2) from 7:30 pm-10 pm. W/S 2: Brookfield Hall on Sunday 18th (9:30 – 3 pm). Cost: \$35.00 per head (incl. Refreshments, booklet). Contact me to go along.

Grants: MCCG has won several grants to help restore creekside vegetation along the creeks in the catchment. One grant for \$40,000 will be used at the Produce Store site to erect two large (30,000 litre) rainwater tanks to store water for use on that site and other restoration sites in the catchment. If you have ideas about projects you want funded to look after the catchment, contact me on 0408 774 631.

Greg Siepen

Want the latest grants and funding news?

Landcare Queensland's monthly bulletin, Q-links, is full of useful information about grants and funding opportunities, new resources and publications, landcare industry news, events and promotional opportunities, and special offers for landcare and conservation workers and volunteers. It is a valuable source of up to date information and it arrives every month in your in-box, free of charge. To subscribe, visit www.landcare.org.au/JOINMAILINGLISTS.htm or email kerri@landcare.com.au.

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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Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Chairman's Report

First, I would like to wish all our members a happy and prosperous New Year. The year 2007 has started off with a number of new projects and initiatives, strongly supported by our coordinator Greg Siepen. These include

- progress towards establishment of a Centre of our own at the Caretaker's Cottage, Gold Creek;
- workshops on horse management on small properties;
- a Platypus Festival celebrating our tenth year of existence; and
- a collaborative project with the Richmond Birdwing Recovery Network, where we will be supporting them with breeding this endangered butterfly.

Further details of these projects will be covered elsewhere in the newsletter. And, for those who have not seen the Caretaker's Cottage, a photo is included on page 1.

As indicated in our last newsletter, we are keen to develop a list of species that occur in our Catchment. The Queensland Herbarium list is a useful starting point, but that includes only species where they have retained specimens. Many of the commoner species are not represented. If you would like a copy of this list, please advise and I will email or post it to you. We would welcome assistance in contributing further species to the list; please contact Graeme Wilson or myself. SEQ Catchments (our regional NRM body) has generously provided us with a GPS which should be invaluable for this project. For the time being, I will look after it; if anyone would like to borrow it for periods of a week or so, please contact me by phone (3374 1468) or email (jbhacker@powerup.com.au). For each collection we need to know (1) the species; (2) who identified it; (3) the habitat; (4) brief note on location; and (5) latitude and longitude. This is an exciting project where we can all contribute.

In another new project, MCCG is contributing to a Brisbane Catchments Network program initially mapping cat's claw throughout the City and subsequently working towards controlling this invasive environmental weed. Again, our new GPS will come in handy. If you are aware of cat's claw in your area please contact either Malcolm (3374 0649) or me to record details (a standardised assessment system is required to provide consistency over the whole City).

Bryan Hacker

You said -----

Comments in the last M.C.C.G. newsletter on a perceived lack of small birds in our gardens and the problems of dehydration suffered by our local wildlife prompts me to write of the success I have had in attracting many of the smaller bird species to my newly-established garden.

I provided a cheap, simple and safe water supply by placing a large plastic bowl inside a disused hanging planter and hooking it into a small wattle close to the house at an easy-to-reach level (see photo p 5) I initially had only one, but it was so successful that I added two more.

Our regular visitors now include several types of honeyeaters, spinebills, eastern yellow robins and often small flocks of double-barred finches. I think this method of supplying water has been successful because the birds can flit to and from nearby branches, they are safe from cats and the overhanging branches provide shade and some protection from the larger predatory birds. The nearby area is largely planted with native grasses, trees and shrubs from the MCCG nursery.

I have seen the occasional magpie try to dip his beak in for a drink, but the access is really too confined for them to feel at home. This is definitely where little birds rule! – *and* they are untroubled by our enjoyed close observation of them from our patio.

Dianne Lloyd

Reptiles are turning up everywhere, possibly looking for water since the natural water courses and sources are dwindling so fast. This young blue tongue (photo p 5) appeared on our back patio while a python languished in a frog pond. The baby blue tongue disappeared as soon as it was shown the door, but it reassured us that blue tongues are still breeding in our back-yard.

Dale Borgelt

On 18th December 2006 one of our nursery volunteers found the body of a tiny bat on the dam wall at Gold Creek Reservoir. The specimen was sent to Les Hall for examination. He identified it as a Hairy-nosed Freetail Bat. As yet this species has not been described and its scientific name is *Mormopterus 'Species 6'*. Its known distribution is from the southern half of the Northern Territory to Central Queensland and north-western NSW; it has been recorded from only 15 locations and it appears to be extremely rare throughout its range. This discovery at Gold Creek extends the knowledge of its distribution.

If any member of MCCG finds or sees anything they consider unusual it is worth sending the specimen, or, if not possible, a photo of it to the Queensland Museum or to an expert in the relevant field for identification. If it is something quite common you will not waste much of the expert's time and on the other hand you may have something of quite valuable scientific interest.

Anon.

Plant Families 13-Anacardiaceae

We have looked at 12 Families over the last few years, on the basis of their being large and/or substantially represented here. For a change, the Anacardiaceae is neither but includes some interesting species. And for those struggling to learn some of the daunting array of species, it may be helpful to focus on small groups and get to know some of their members.

The Family takes its name from the genus *Anacardium*, known to us from the species *A. occidentale*, the cashew, which originated in the West Indies but is now cultivated in tropical locations around the world. Much better known is the mango (*Mangifera indica*), of Indian origin, while the pistachio nut (*Pistacia vera*) of Mediterranean origin is now quite familiar. Well enough known to some of us but not greatly admired is the Brazilian Pepper Tree (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) from Central and South America, which has become a troublesome weed tree.

Quite a few species are toxic, which is a problem because some are highly prized ornamentals. In fact the sap of the mango, oozing from the point of attachment of the fruit, is damaging to many people, while anyone coming to handle a fresh fruit of the cashew should have nothing to do with it without expert advice.

But coming to local species, there are only two here; both fine trees. *Rhodospaera rhodanthema* (Deep Yellow Wood) is quite widespread. It is especially attractive in flower and with new leaf. The other is *Euroschinus falcata* (Ribbon Wood), less common. A third species may well have once occurred here in favourable situations but can now be seen only a little further north. It is the Burdekin Plum (*Pleiogynium timorense*), another attractive tree and commonly grown where there is enough space.

Since writing the above, an article arrived (see below); On the Trail of a Word. It is about another species of *Pistacia*, *P. terebinthus*, an early source of turpentine. That is in keeping with comments above about unpleasant (not least in terms of palatability) sap in some of the Family species, and may well account for many people stating that some varieties of mango taste of turpentine. And on the subject of odours occurring through a Family of plants: We recently had at our nursery a few seedlings which had lost their label. Someone tried smelling the leaves for a clue and declared them to be mangoes, but subsequent growth revealed them as *Euroschinus*.

Graeme Wilson

On the trail of a word....

The Psalm on Sunday 7 January happened to be Psalm 29. Reading it (without concentrating as much as perhaps I should have done), I read aloud verse 8: 'The voice of the Lord rends the terebinth trees and strips bare the forests'. (version in Australian Prayer Book). 'terebinth'? I asked myself, remembering (when I should have had my mind on more spiritual matters) – what has that to do with our dreaded weed broad-leaved pepper, otherwise known as *Schinus terebinthifolius* – i.e. leaves like terebinth?

Rushing home to my Shorter Oxford (having first confessed to not having chopped down enough Chinese elms in the previous week) I looked up 'terebinth'. Apparently, it is the name of two species of *Pistacia* (*P. terebinthus* and *P. palaestina*), the former of which was an early source of turpentine. (Another species of *Pistacia*, *P. vera* is the tree that provides us with the pistachio nut). And what about turpentine? This word was, apparently, derived from old French ter(e)bentine, thence Chian turpentine, the sticky fragrant resin of the terebinth tree!

Aren't words fun? I will have to pay more attention to the psalms on future Sundays!!

Bryan Hacker

Abrus precatorius – is it a native?

This species, sometimes called the precatory bean, is very easily identified by its small pinnate leaves, twining habit, and persistent woody pods containing persistent red and black seeds. (photo p.1) I had always thought this rather delicate vine growing in my garden was a native. However, although this species is native to Australia, my **subspecies** is exotic.

According to Tony Bean of the Queensland Herbarium, in a letter to Robert Whyte of SOWN (Enoggera Creek), there are two subspecies of *A. precatorius*, subsp. *precatorius* being native to Queensland north of Rockhampton and extending to south-east Asia, and subsp. *africanus*, native to tropical Africa and Madagascar. The former has smooth pods generally 3-4 cm long and the latter, pods somewhat shorter and with tubercles (wart-like swellings). Plants collected in the Brisbane area (and north to Miriamvale) are, in fact, the African subspecies.

Bryan Hacker



Lingustrum sinense ▼



▲ *Lingustrum lucidum*
(see Privets - two weedy species from Asia p. 6)
Photos: Bryan Hacker



Diploglottis australia (see The Native Tamarind p. 7)
▼



▲ A less common visitor than once (see You said, p. 3) Photo Dale Borgelt



Photos: Bryan Hacker

◀ Thanks for the water (see You said, p. 3)
Photo: Dianne Lloyd

Glyphosate – Take Care

When spraying with glyphosate you should know that, even with experience and great care, there is a risk of harm-even death-to planted or naturally occurring vegetation in the vicinity. Some plant groups seem to be more susceptible than others. In my experience the Proteaceae (*Banksia*, *Grevillea* etc.) appear to be particularly so.

The problem lies with glyphosate reaching the soil. A belief that it is broken down on immediate contact with soil, and therefore will not be taken up by roots, is not true. Apparently bacteria are largely responsible for breakdown and those effective for doing so may not occur or at least be sufficiently abundant. If so, glyphosate which is quite stable persists in the soil and water, and may be absorbed by roots..

In addition to direct uptake by roots, there is the part played by mycorrhizas, fungi which extend from roots out in to the soil and transferring substances from soil to roots-an important process for many plant species. Moreover, the Proteaceae have specialized so called proteoid roots, of which some are seen near the soil surface (at least under litter) and thus immediately adjacent to glyphosate falling to the ground.

The message from this is that care should be taken not only to avoid spray reaching foliage of desirable plants, but to minimize its reaching the soil because their roots may extend to the weeds being sprayed.

If you are interested in the subject, there is massive reference- much of it greatly conflicting- on the internet.

Andrew Wilson

Privets – two weedy species from Asia

There are two species in our district that are referred to as privet; both are declared Class 3 plants under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*. The Act prohibits the supply or sale of Class 3 plants and may require their removal from environmentally significant areas. They are broad-leaved privet (*Ligustrum lucidum*) and Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*). The Environment Protection Agency lists broad leaf privet 15th in its list of the 200 worst environmental weeds in South-east Queensland and small-leaved privet, 21st. Broad leaf privet is also noted as an important weed in South Africa.
Bryan Hacker

Both species are originally from China and Japan. Broad-leaved privet is a major problem outside our district, particularly in upland areas and fertile soils, for example around Maleny and sub-coastal NSW. In Brookfield it seems to find life a little tougher but is still a common weed tree, most obvious at flowering time in November-December, when trees bear large bunches of small white flowers (see photo on p. 5). Chinese privet is much less common in our district and appears (from what I have seen on my travels) to favour softer conditions. It flowers earlier than its larger cousin, about September (see photo on p. 5).

The genus *Ligustrum* is in the olive family, Oleaceae. Broad leafed privet is a densely branched tree up to about 10 m tall that can form thickets, destroying habitat. Leaves are opposite, up to 12 cm long, with a pointed tip and fruit are black berries, formed in dense bunches. Chinese privet is commonly more of a shrub than a tree, also with opposite leaves, although these are much smaller, less than 5 cm long. When not in flower, it can be confused with the local lilly pillly *Syzygium smithii* (previously *Acmena smithii*), but differs in having softly hairy stems and leaves on young branches all in a plane.

Both species of privet may be controlled by treating freshly cut stumps with 1:1 glyphosate (Roundup), or 1 part trichlorpyr in 20 L diesel. Check DNR&W Factsheets PP69 and 94 for further details.

MCCG strongly recommends to all members that they remove both species of privet from their land.

Bryan Hacker

Notes from the Nursery

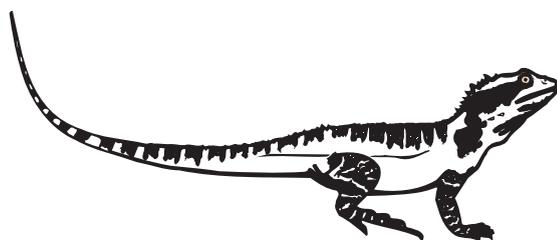
Whether because of the little rain we had in January or the hope that at this time of the year there must be useful rain ahead, there has been a return to larger numbers of plants going out to members. In fact, in January about 3500 went, quite the largest monthly number ever. Let's hope that the recent rain came soon enough and continues.

Overall, activities are on the increase and look like continuing to do so. The Richmond Birdwing Recovery Network (RBRN) program looks to us for support. We continue to propagate vines which feed into it and have at the time of writing hundreds on our benches. Expected increase in numbers has led to further extension of bench space. Landholders are encouraged to grow some if they have suitable sites. We sell them at \$6. (People who are part of an organized program to grow large numbers get them free.) The RBRN butterfly breeding house being erected (see this page) requires advanced vines in large pots. We will provide these and have accepted responsibility for their maintenance. At one stage in the breeding, larvae will be taken to the Cottage and fed on leaves from a "leaf farm" which we will establish and maintain.

Whatever activities develop in the Cottage, it is certain that the nursery will have some involvement.

We are adding to the planting adjacent to the nursery, mainly so that we can show members what some species look like, thus aiding them in choice of plants.

Graeme Wilson



The Gold Creek Richmond Birdwing Captive Rearing Facility

Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) and Brisbane City Council have agreed to the construction of a Captive Rearing Facility for the Richmond Birdwing Recovery Network (RBRN) close to the Gold Creek Dam. The Facility, to be constructed near the MCCG Nursery, will be used to investigate in-breeding depression in the Richmond Birdwing butterfly. Subject to approvals from EPA, birdwings from selected areas will be mated and temporarily maintained in a flight cage, where eggs laid will be assessed in a series of experiments for fertility, hatch and the vigour of early instar larvae. If methods being developed are successful, procedures for rehabilitation of in-bred field colonies (eg at Burleigh Heads National Park) will form part of the Recovery Process for the threatened butterfly. At the conclusion of experiments with the butterflies (taking 3 or more years) the facility will be used to house plants from the MCCG Nursery and may be moved to a more appropriate location.

My thanks on behalf of the RBRN Council, to the Management Committee of MCCG for agreeing to host this facility. Thanks especially to Greg Siepen, Moggill Creek Catchment Co-ordinator, for successfully coordinating the Grant Application to the Gaming Fund.

Don Sands, President RBRN

The Native Tamarind – *Diploglottis australis*

The native tamarind is an attractive medium-sized rainforest tree that is quite common in our catchment. Unlike so many rainforest trees, it is very distinctive and easily recognised. Despite its common name, it is not related to the South-east Asian tamarind, the fruit of which is used in cooking. Native tamarind is in the family Sapindaceae (see Graeme Wilson's article in our Summer 2004 issue), whereas the true tamarind, *Tamarindus indica*, is in the family Caesalpiniaceae, a family that includes poinciana and leopard tree.

Seedling growth is fairly slow for a couple of years, but the native tamarind then grows quite rapidly, rarely branching before it is 2-3 m tall. Leaves are large, pinnate and showy, with 8-12 hairy leaflets. The tree can achieve a height of 35 m, but this would be unusual. A fine tree close to our Nursery is perhaps 10-12 m tall, with spreading branches.

Native tamarind flowers in early summer, producing large clusters of flowers terminally and from upper leaf axils. Flowers are golden brown and are followed by 3-lobed fruit, each seed surrounded by a succulent, somewhat acidic, edible aril (like the fleshy part of a litchi fruit). These are very attractive to fruit-eating birds including fruit doves, pigeons, green catbirds and satin bowerbirds. Seeds may be sown fresh and germinate rapidly (see photo on page 5).

Bryan Hacker

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CHAIRMAN!

Australia Day Citizen 2007 - Dr Bryan Hacker

Bryan is a founding member of the Moggill Creek Catchment Group and has been Chairman of the MCCG since his retirement from CSIRO in 2000. This prestigious and well-deserved award was presented to Bryan during the 2007 Australia Day Lord Mayor's Awards. He was recognised for his outstanding contribution to the community.

He actively labours in bush regeneration, in the numerous hands-on tasks of our organization and visits landholders to advise on their revegetation activities. He carries out much of the administrative work in what is now a large Group with a membership approaching 400 and represents us at the frequent meetings with the numerous bodies with which we are associated.

Bryan's dedication to preserving our unique natural environment for future generations here in Brisbane's west is a fine example to others.

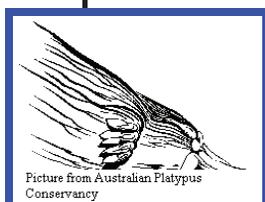
Not only is this award to him gratifying to us, but so too is the fact that with so many persons engaged in such a wide range of valuable community activities, the awardee has been chosen from our particular interest.

PLATYPUS FESTIVAL

IT'S THE MCCG'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY!

WHEN: SUNDAY 22ND APRIL 2007
WHERE: BROOKFIELD SHOWGROUNDS
TIME: 10.00 AM – 1.30 PM.

- * **KIDS' art and craft activities (all day)**
- * **KIDS' creek/platypus-themed Art Competition**
(Bring entries 10am-1pm-\$1.00 fee)
- * **ENVIRONMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHY tips from an expert-bring along your camera!**
- * **HUGO the HEALTHY WATERWAYS mascot**
- * **GECKOES live wildlife displays (11am & 12.45pm)**
- * **ENVIRONMENTAL break dancing**
- * **RSPCA display**
- * **Sausage sizzle (all day)**
- * **ENVIRONMENTAL displays and information from our neighbouring catchments (all day)**
- * **WILDLIFE QUEENSLAND (WPSQ)**
- * **THE MCCG ANNUAL PLATYPUS SURVEY will start the festival at 5.30 am - old and new volunteers welcome!**



Picture from Australian Platypus Conservancy

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