

MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

www.moggillcreek.org.au



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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2008



◀ A healthy partnership (see article p.6)
Photo: Jenny Mulchrone



▲ Favourite (see Photography Competition Report, p.8)
Photo: Peter Crome



▲ Ready to go

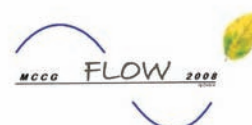


◀ Planting



◀ Weeding

Open Day (see Free Lunch, p. 3)
Photos: Dale Borgelt



Editorial

This has been an encouraging quarter. First, the unusual pattern of frequent rain throughout the year has continued. While not sufficient to restore soil water at depth, an insurance against a prolonged dry period, it has kept plants growing so that vegetation looks good and there are prospects of another season of plentiful seed production.

Then there is the extent of planting taking place. An essential foundation for our objective of achieving meaningful replacement of native vegetation is sufficient renewal on private landholdings. This is carried out using plants supplied from our nursery. Plants have been going out at a good rate, and in the last month (before the time of writing), 2000 went, the most ever.

Finally, the Cottage. Last year it was opened, accompanied by much talk. Now there is increasing action to show. Much has already been done in the building and recently there was the Open Day at which real hands-on work was done, accompanied by conducted excursions into the surrounding land.

There is one stray photo in this issue, on p.5, without an accompanying article. It shows a king parrot eating seed of Dodonea (hop bush) in a member's garden, and is a reminder that if we want birds, or indeed any other native animals, on our properties, we should provide their needs.

Chairman's Report

(This report was written prior to the recent AGM when the Chairman retired from the position to become Vice-Chairman)

I wish to thank the members of MCCG and particularly the other committee members for support and friendship during my shorter than anticipated time as Chairman.

Unfortunately family and business requirements have not allowed me to achieve all I set out to do. I will continue to support MCCG where possible and in particular with the establishment of the Tax exempt fund.

I continue to encourage all members to drop into the Cottage on a Thursday morning to meet some of the team and learn more about what MCCG does. Hopefully you will be inspired to give some time to assist us in what I consider to be a very worthy cause. It does not have to be a lot as everything helps.

Richard Woodhead

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: John Crowley

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Catchment Coordinator's Report

Thank you to all those who came to the MCCG's Open Day on Sunday 2 November. Over 50 people came and planted 200 native plants, removed lantana in areas around the Cottage, learnt about weeds and natives and heard about the history of the Gold Creek Dam area.

There have been a few new members join MCCG recently and I would like to give them a warm welcome and invite them to contact me if they would like advice or to arrange a property visit.

Congratulations to our nursery manager and long-time committee member Graeme Wilson, who was recently honoured for his voluntary work by becoming a finalist in the Arbour Day Awards.

There have been a few city-wide events in the last few months that have been spreading the environmental message. One such was the Catchment Kids Concert held at City Hall. Catchment Kids is about primary school aged students teaching other students about local environmental issues through song, dance or acting. Over 300 children were involved from eight schools. Unfortunately there were no schools from our area and I'm hoping that I can sign some up for next year. Greenfest was another city-wide event held at Southbank which attracted a lot of visitors. The Brisbane Catchments Network held a stall there which generated much interest and hopefully led to a few new members for the various catchment groups, including ours.

Thank you for all your hard work in rehabilitating your local environments this year. I hope you have a safe and enjoyable Christmas and look forward to working with you in the coming year.

Jenny Mulchrone

FREE LUNCH (well sort of)

The lunch was free, but first, 53 members of Moggill Creek Catchment Group fought lantana, identified weeds, planted 200 local native plants and found out more about the Gold Creek Reserve, Dam, Nursery and Cottage. (See photos of planting, weeding and assembling for a walk, on p 1.)

Celebrating their first year in residence in *The Cottage*, the MCCG held an open morning on Sunday 2nd November. The MCCG committee freely admitted that "We thought members of the community might be attracted by the free lunch and come later, but they turned up early morning with rolled up sleeves, gloves and small tools ready to work." Most only downed tools to find out more about their area. They followed David Moore on his weed and plant identification bush walk. They went with Gordon Grigg and Brian Leahy to find out more about the Gold Creek Dam and its history. They went to the Nursery where Graeme Wilson pointed out that it was important to plant the full range of local species not just trees. They looked at books, displays and information at The Cottage. And then they had a BBQ lunch.

Open to all members of the community, this event aimed to provide an update on the work of the MCCG and the use of *The Cottage*, which is open Thursdays from 9.30am to 2.30pm when Catchment coordinator Jenny Mulchrone and Dale Borgelt are on hand. For those who missed the day, further information on the Group is available at its website www.moggillcreek.org.au

Dale Borgelt

Book Review

Mangroves to Mountains

A Field Guide to the Native Plants of South-east Queensland

This book, published earlier this year, is a 'must' for those who are interested in our local plants. The authors – Glen Lieper, Jan Glazebrook, Denis Cox and Kerry Rathie – have extended their previous 2-volume publication and this new, revised edition includes 2,200 species.

Species listed in the book are grouped according to eight different ecological zones. The three zones of most concern to us are eucalypt forest, rain forest and freshwater wetlands. Within each zone, species are arranged according to colour of the flowers or fruits, with that colour at the top of the page, as an aid to rapid identification. There are also separate sections devoted to eucalypts and mistletoes. Each page includes photographs of 3-5 species and in many instances there is an additional photograph or line drawing showing some detail of flower, leaf or fruit. The excellent photographs are complemented by short descriptions, including scientific and family names as well as common names.

Some weed species are included – for example, the moth vine, *Araujia sericifera* – but no attempt has been made to include all the weeds. Those that are included are marked with an asterisk. Very few grasses are included, either native or exotic.

I understand that the book is not available at the usual commercial outlets, so to obtain your copy, phone Denis Cox of the Logan River Branch of S.G.A.P. on 07 5546 8590. The recommended retail price is \$50.

Bryan Hacker

Acanophora compressa

For the last several months, there has been noticeable damage to the lantana bushes in the Moggill Creek Catchment area. This is caused by the sucking bug *Acanophora compressa*, originally from Mexico which was introduced into Queensland in 1995 as a biocontrol agent against lantana (See photos p 5). It did not establish well when first introduced, and remained very scarce until 2003 when large populations first appeared on lantana but also on fiddlewoods, an ornamental tree from the West Indies which was widely planted as a screen in the 1970s and 1980s. Populations on fiddlewood trees caused tree dieback and problems with sticky honeydew falling on cars and lawns and leading to black mould growth. Unfortunately damage to lantana was nowhere near as great.

This year in contrast, the acanophora bug has really gone for lantana, and is causing real damage right across the south east. Huge populations have built up on lantana and dead and dying plants can be seen from Boonah to Brisbane. So what has happened? It seems it is climate – rainfall and temperatures. Acanophora bugs don't like high temperatures (daytime above 35°), and are killed by even short periods above 37°. So hot summers kill most of the bugs leaving only a few surviving in cooler sites, and the populations take a long time to build up again. Last summer (2007-2008) however was very cool, and aconophora populations survived unhindered.

Rainfall is the other key. As we all know only too well, there have been a succession of very dry years in the south-east. In dry conditions, lantana stops growing and the leaves wilt and fall off. Aconophora are sap-feeders and use their piercing mouthparts to tap the plant's sap channels. When lantana stops growing, the sap flow stops too, and there is no food for the bugs, so they fly off in search of somewhere better – probably a fiddlewood tree which does not dry up so fast - and also stop breeding. But last summer was wetter than the previous years, and in particular the winter of 2007 was quite wet, so lantana growth continued unchecked – and so did the aconophora bug populations feeding on the lantana.

What now? Unfortunately, predictions are for a hot summer this year, and the bugs will be killed if daytime temperatures exceed 37° even for a short time. This may allow the damaged lantana bushes to recover. So if we have some very hot days, you will see the bugs disappear. That is a good time to get in quickly and clear the lantana bushes before they have a chance to grow back. If next winter is fairly wet again, the aconophora bug will recover and return to damaging numbers again next year.

For a factsheet on the lantana sucking bug, go to www.dpi.qld.gov.au/documents/Biosecurity_EnvironmentalPests and search under aconophora.

Rachel McFadyen

Annual Platypus Survey

This year's survey proved to be both exciting and rewarding, with 15 individual platypuses seen in our Catchment by keen volunteer observers. This result made the 5.00 am start on the chilly morning of August 24th well worth the sacrifice of a Sunday sleep-in!

Due to better rainfall during 2008 and therefore more water in the creeks, we increased the number of volunteers and monitoring sites. The monitoring spanned lower Moggill Creek (near Moggill Road in Kenmore) to upper Moggill Creek (Upper Brookfield) and also Gold Creek from the Gold Creek Dam to its junction with Moggill Creek. The sightings occurred throughout the survey area, and only upper Gold Creek (from Jones Rd to the Dam) disappointed with no sightings, for the second consecutive year.

Since the first annual survey in 2005, the highest number of sightings has been six, so 15 is a significant increase. It raises interesting questions such as where do the platypuses go during drought when there is little water in the creeks, and are they breeding and thriving, or just surviving?

Although this year's survey results are encouraging, we must remain vigilant. One key concern during the survey was the amount of litter observed in the creeks, particularly in the more urban park sites along lower Moggill Creek. Litter and fish traps are real threats to the survival of platypuses as well as ongoing pollution, creek bank degradation, and pumping from creeks.

However, one of the many wonderful aspects of community involvements such as the annual Survey is that it raises public awareness of these remarkable, unique native animals that live literally amidst us, and hopefully the broader community will become more caring of our creeks.

The MCCG Committee thanks all volunteers and UQ students who participated with great enthusiasm. A special thanks to Dot Dalglish and the Girl Guides who did a wonderful job cooking the greatly appreciated post-survey breakfast.

We look forward to next year's survey. Watch this space.

Christine Hosking



▲ *Alyxia ruscifolia* (see article p.7)
Photo: Bryan Hacker

◀ Moth vine (see article p.7)
Photo: Bryan Hacker



Attract these (see Editorial p.2) ►
Photo: Christine Hosking



◀ Cat damage (see Cats can be so destructive, p.7)
Photo: Bryan hacker

Acanophora adults (top) and
nymphs (bottom)
(see Article p.4)
Photos: Rachel McFadyen ►



What did this?
(see Mystery solved p.6)
Photo: Yvonne Bouwman



▲ Ground cover (see Encouraging ground cover p. 7)

Photo: Gordon Grigg

Moth vine – *Araujia sericifera*

Moth vine is a robust twiner from Peru, which occurs infrequently in our Catchment but which we do not want to encourage. It may be distinguished from many other vines by its stems exuding a milky latex when broken, and its opposite leaves, the under-surfaces of which are dull whitish green and densely covered with minute hairs. The flowering plant photographed (p. 5) was in Ravensbourne National Park, where the species is quite common.

Leaves are up to 10 cm long and 6 cm wide and triangular in shape. Moth vine flowers are pretty and bell-shaped and appear from summer to autumn. They are white to pale pink in colour, fragrant and about 20 mm in diameter. The fruit is up to 10 cm long and rather like a choko in appearance, accounting for its alternative common name of 'false choko'. It is also known as 'cruel vine' owing to its sticky pollen, which traps insects.

Moth vine should not be confused with the locally abundant silk pod (*Parsonsia straminea*), which lacks the milky latex. The native Lloyd's milk vine (*Marsdenia lloydii*), which similarly occurs in our catchment, also has milky latex and can be confused with moth vine. However, in contrast to moth vine, its flowers are much smaller, it lacks the dense hairs on the under-surface of its leaves and older stems become corky.

Moth vine is now classified in the Apocynaceae, the same family as the chain fruit, also featured in this issue.

Bryan Hacker

A healthy partnership for our catchment

A partnership between the Moggill Creek Catchment Group, a local business, Brisbane City Council and private landholders has seen to the successful revegetation of native plants along the banks of a section of Moggill Creek.

Twelve staff and their families from the company Solutions IE, joined forces with Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) and Habitat Brisbane to plant 200 trees on an area of public land adjoining Phil Bird's property at Upper Brookfield. (The photo on p 1 includes some of Solutions IE staff together with the Birds, MCCG Committee and a representative of Habitat Brisbane.)

Solutions IE, a property management business, donated over \$1,000 to MCCG for hosting the event and MCCG in return provided the plants and lunch on the day. BCC supported the event with mulch and watering. Active MCCG members Phil and Marie Bird really appreciated the help of the staff who volunteered their time on the day. "We would really like to thank the staff from Solutions IE who have given up their Sunday to help us revegetate this area; it has saved us a lot of time and effort" Phil said.

Phil and Marie have been removing weeds and replanting natives on their own property and the adjacent public land since they moved to the area. The planting site is along a section of Moggill Creek and is vital to the overall health of the catchment. The plants will not only provide habitat for local wildlife but also stabilise the creek's banks and improve the health of our waterways.

Manager of Solutions IE, James Freestun, was pleased with the day stating "It is important for our company to give something back to the community and the environment and consider our carbon footprint. It's been a real pleasure for our staff to meet with members of the MCCG and learn more about the environment. We hope to make this an ongoing annual event."

If you would like to support or find out further information about the activities of the MCCG, or discuss ways your business can be involved in local environmental projects, please contact the Catchment Coordinator for the Moggill Creek Catchment, Jenny Mulchrone on (07) 3407 0052.

Jenny Mulchrone

Mystery Solved

One morning, imagine my surprise when on going to the newly planted area at the bottom of our block in Pullenvale I saw this sadly damaged eucalyptus tree (photo p 5). I puzzled as to what animal could wreak such havoc and why. My first thought was White Cockatoos as I know that they particularly like shredding wood. I rang the Museum, a great source of all sorts of information, and they gave me an email address to send the photos to and within a half hour a most helpful gentleman gave me the news that in fact it was a Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. On consulting my Readers Digest Book of Birds it describes just this damage. They seek out the Cossett moth larvae (the channel can clearly be seen in the photo) and in fact they can actually hear it in the tree. The poor tree will fall any day now as it has split quite badly and is on a precarious lean.

Yvonne Bouwman

Cats can be so destructive

The other day I had a call from Don Midgley, Gillies Rd. “Come and have a look”, he said. “Something has been attacking my pardalotes’ nests, and I suspect it is a cat.”

So I went out to have a look. There were quite a few holes in an earth bank where a farm track had been cut into a hillside, and they certainly looked like Pardalotes’ nests. Sadly, a couple had been destroyed, each with the remains of a nest at the entrance (see photo p 5). Apparently there had been cats around, including one that seemed to be a domestic animal. Cats can travel quite large distances and will kill wildlife even if they are well fed at home.

So, if you do keep a cat, be sure to keep it inside at night – cats can be so destructive.

Bryan Hacker

Encouraging Groundcover

Weed control in revegetated areas is a real challenge, and lots of us are trying to deal with that right now, with the rainfalls and warm conditions. The challenge is to control the weeds but also maintain a healthy understory and ground cover which can support the insects and other arthropods on which the small lizards, frogs and so many of the birds depend.

Of course the weeds make a pretty good habitat for most of the critters anyway, but understandably most people don’t want their carefully re-planted hillside to become overgrown. Native grasses make a good ground cover and, most importantly, a good grass cover does a good job of inhibiting weeds. I have found on our place that repeated brushcutting (at least a couple of times a year), ideally before the weeds set seed, is a good way to manage the annual weeds and it also leads to the establishment of native grasses. (See photo p 5) Keep a good lookout, though, for the inevitable crop of tiny self-sown seedling trees and shrubs; given the chance they’ll become a significant part of the mature patch. In smaller areas, grass will usually establish after hand pulling weeds. Brushcutting or hand pulling can be supplemented with the careful, spot use of a selective herbicide such as Kamba M or Amicide which does not kill the grass [but read carefully and adhere to the safety precautions outlined on the pack and, as well, refer to the Materials Safety Data Sheet, MSDS, via the Web].

A healthy groundcover and understory are significant in the natural food web and an important part of a healthy forest.

The benefits are visual appeal, weed control and maintenance of the insect populations as a major component of the biodiversity as well as a source of food for frogs, lizards and birds.

Gordon Grigg

Alyxia ruscifolia – chain fruit

Alyxia ruscifolia is a shrub which is quite common in the few remaining patches of dry rainforest in our Catchment. It is very distinctive, with thick, sharply pointed leaves up to 6 cm long, generally in whorls of 3-6. *A. ruscifolia* has a rather open growth habit, ascending to a height of 3 m or more.

The small white flowers are very pretty and are produced in leaf axils or towards the tips of branches in spring (see photo on page 5). They are sweetly scented and are followed by orange to red fruit which can be spherical or comprise a chain of 3-4 or more joined spheres, this accounting for the plants common name ‘chain fruit’. The botanical name comes from alyxia (chain) and ruscifolia (having leaves like *Ruscus* (genus name derived from the Anglo-Saxon for holly or box).

There are three botanical varieties of chain fruit in South-east Queensland, differing in minor details of leaf shape and scabrosity. Another species – *A. magnifolia* – has larger leaves and mainly occurs north of Brisbane.

In my experience, growth is very slow, so a plant 2-3 m tall could be decades old. So if you are lucky enough to have this plant growing on your land – make sure you look after it!

Bryan Hacker

Koalas in Kenmore Hills, Brookfield and Pullenvale

During 2008 koala sightings have been reported to the MCCG from Mt. Coot-tha Forest and Pullenvale Forest Park and on properties in Gap Creek Rd, Bielby Rd and Haven Rd.

Like platypuses, koalas are cryptic animals, meaning that they often go unnoticed. Tree clearing, cars and dogs are key threats to the koala, which is now considered by researchers to be in danger of extinction in southeast Queensland within 20 years.

Property owners who retain native bushland and plant koala food trees such as *Eucalyptus microcorys* and *E. propinqua* will greatly assist in the survival of this species in our catchment.

Chris Hosking

Note. Please report any koala sightings to Chris on 3374 3453 or email: cjmhosk@optusnet.com.au

2008 Photography Competition Report

The 10th Annual Photography Competition attracted a record number of entries, with a great improvement in the quality of entries, according to the judge Dr Joseph McDowell, Senior Lecturer in Photography at Griffith University. For the first time, entries were received from other Brisbane Catchments.

Members of the U3A, Brisbane, were again very successful with their entries; Joyce Caesar won the Supreme Award Prize, with her fellow club members, Pamela Flower, Nina Fitzpatrick and Ross Barber winning in other sections.

Other Adult winners were Maria Wright, Evan Gray, Howard Baker, Marianne Willink, Grahame Clarke and John May. Young photography winners were Eamonn Doyle, Megan Mills, Meera Joyce, Jack Hay and Sam Hay.

There was considerable interest in the Display in Kenmore Village Centre, with many more votes being cast in the People's Choice section than in other years. In this latter, the photo of the little frog sitting in the lily flower was a clear winner. (See photo on p.1)

I would like to thank the following people who helped me with sponsorship, publicity and preparation of the Display: Judy Gower, Jenny Mulchrone, Gaynor Johnson Andrew and Graeme Wilson, Jocelyn Henry, Margaret Whyte, Malcolm Frost, Fraser Trueman and the many rostered helpers at the Centre.

Finally, without the following sponsors and donors, this competition would not have been possible:

Blazing Star Health Food Store, Kenmore; Brookfield Produce and Pet Pavilion; Café Bliss, Kenmore; Centenary Hire, Darra; Linda and Grahame Clarke; Gunn Family, Brookfield; Suzanne Horsley; Kenmore Centre for Health; Kenmore Veterinary Surgery; Mitre 10, Kenmore; Malouf Pharmacy, Kenmore; Moggill Constructions; The Pet Chalet, Upper Brookfield; Pool Mart, Kenmore; Orrum Jewellers, Kenmore; Radio 4mbs classic fm 103.7; Sugarwood Grove Garden Villas, Bellbowrie; Water Solutions, Kenmore; Young Futures; Cr Margaret de Wit; Dr Bruce Flegg; Kodak Express, Kenmore; Kenmore Village Centre Management; The Print Shoppe; The Local Bulletin.

Robyn Frost

Living Landscapes Forum, Boonah (10-12 September)

Some words of wisdom from Dr John Williams, NSW Natural Resources
Commissioner and member of the Wentworth Group

“If we don’t start investing in our Natural Resources with the same zeal as we do in hard infrastructure, we, or particularly our grandchildren will pay a very dear price.”

“Unlike hard infrastructure Natural Infrastructure can’t be rebuilt in a political term or two – it takes decades – it is intergenerational.”

“Our land abounds in nature’s gifts – not great roads.”

“Planning is useless unless it delivers purposes and targets.”

“We can’t afford to get it wrong”

“We need to be able to value both social and natural capacity in ways we haven’t been able to before – e.g. Ecosystem Services.”

“We need to back the ability of the Community to respond and provide the right support/framework and build community capacity.”

“If the community doesn’t own the aspiration it will be just a nice piece of paper – communication is the key and we should learn from our successes.”

Committee 2008-2009

Malcolm Frost	<i>(Chairman)</i>
Richard Woodhead	<i>(Vice-Chairman)</i>
John Crowley	<i>(Secretary)</i>
Joanna Yesberg	<i>(Treasurer)</i>
Dale Borgelt	<i>(Public Relations)</i>
Bryan Hacker	<i>(Landcare Advisor)</i>
Graeme Wilson	<i>(Nursery Manager, Newsletter Editor)</i>
Damien Egan	
Gordon Grigg	
Adrian Webb	