

MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

www.moggillcreek.org.au



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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2010

Junction hole (see As it was, p. 7) ►



▲ Bushcare workers (see Help wanted, p.8)

Trellis and Plaque (see Gap Creek Project, p. 6) ►
Photo: Dale Borgelt



▼ Leafwing butterfly (see Plants bring butterflies, p. 8)
Photo: Dale Borgelt



▲ School success (see article, p. 4)



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.

Chairman: Malcolm Frost

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Editorial

Things continue to go well for us as seen in this issue. Our Chairman reports the receipt of a substantial grant which will finally allow us to transform unattractive vegetation in a central and conspicuous location to something of which we can be proud. And the news that two properties, with perhaps more to come, have become Koala Refuges, is a move forward from our continual record of koala sightings to official recognition of their presence and the necessity of providing for their welfare. Also, the report on dingids gives some hope that we perhaps now have at least a partial check on the threat of cat's claw creeper.

On a different note: With such diverse readers of this Newsletter, we have to include greatly varied subject matter. There are reports, news, how-to-do-it articles, information about plants and animals, notices of coming events and so on; and these are largely written by a few regular contributors. What is lacking is articles such as that in this issue about a koala sighting. We get an odd one from time to time but often there are none. They really bring the Newsletter to life. We can do nothing about making it happen; it is up to you.

BRISBANE'S WILD WEST CALENDAR 2011

Photo call

We hope you are enjoying your 2010 calendar, a co-production of four local environmental groups (MCCG, The Hut Environmental & Community Association, Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network and Rural Environment Planning Association).

But it's already time to think of 2011, and that depends on the members and friends of these groups – including YOU.

We would like your best and most interesting photos of wildlife – flora and fauna – of Brisbane's western suburbs by **Wednesday 30 June 2010.**

So, while you prepare for MCCG's annual photo competition (and also if you are not planning to enter this), look out some to submit for our calendar. The photos can be digital or hard copy (preferably digital). Please name the subject as accurately as you can.

Please email low-resolution files to theca@hotkey.net.au, or send prints or a CD to THECA, PO Box 804, Kenmore Qld 4069. If we shortlist your photo, we will contact you for a high-res version, and for a caption of 50 words.

For further information, ring or email THECA: 3878 5088, theca@hotkey.net.au.

Chairman's Report

In our last News letter I wrote of our concerns about the Council's Pest Eradication Program. Since then we have, through meetings with Council and correspondence, sought to modify Council's approach to land owners and suggested eradication procedures (for more details see Bryan Hacker's report, p.6). We would be interested to learn of any recent experience by members. We hope that we have made a difference.

Some years ago the Lord Mayor initiated a program to plant two million trees in Brisbane. Originally trees were planted on public land but when all suitable land had been planted Council decided to consider planting on private land. MCCG thanks Dennis Gannaway, Project Manager of the 2 Million Tree Project, for spending some time visiting our Cottage and briefing us on the plans to further this Project. This is an exciting project although we see many challenges to its successful implementation. We understand that invitations inviting them to take part in the Program are being sent out to landowners. Alternatively those interested may seek direct information on how to take part from Council. This Program could provide significant assistance to private landowners for the first time, above that now provided through the Land for Wild Life Program.

Last quarter I reported that MCCG was preparing a review describing MCCG's achievements over the last ten years. Some members are very active in preparing this review. We sent out a questionnaire to help us and although we had hoped for more responses the thirty we have received are proving very useful. It is not too late to send your replies to us.

Our recent presentation displayed at the Kenmore Shopping Centre was a great success and Dale Borgelt, Bryan Hacker and many others who helped put it together and who stood by to answer questions should be congratulated.

Whenever I visit the Cottage I am always impressed at the ongoing gradual transformation of the surrounding garden. Smaller statured local species are being introduced (about 60 so far) to test their suitability, under our particular conditions, for use in gardens. They are clearly labelled and an alphabetical list, showing locations, is available at the Cottage when it is open. Thanks and congratulation to Andrew Wilson who is supervising the project and Deb Ford and her small team of Cottage Gardeners who provide ongoing maintenance. It is well worth a visit to see the progress, apart from enjoying what must be one of the most attractive areas in Brisbane.

In news just to hand, MCCG is very pleased to announce that we have been awarded a Federal Government "Caring for the Country Grant" valued at \$16,800 for Riparian Restoration in Central Brookfield. We plan to use the grant to clear significant weed infestation and revegetate with native plants along the creek bank from the bridge near Brookfield Produce Store and along the creek running by Gold Creek Road.

Malcolm Frost

Creek Ranger's Report

The year is pushing along and MCCG projects are in full swing. By the time you read this the Brookfield Show stall and the Kids' Day at the Cottage will have taken place, with the Public Talk to be held on June 24th. The annual Platypus Survey and Environment Festival will also be coming up on August 1st at Brookfield Hall, so mark them in your diaries now!

A new project looking at the types of dung beetle present in the catchment, and how to encourage them on your property, is currently in the planning stages. Dung beetles perform an important ecological role in recycling dung, and can help property owners out as well as preventing nutrient runoff into our waterways.

I have been working with a number of schools in the area recently, trying to encourage participation in the upcoming schools section of the Photography Competition, as well as general environmental education. Year 4 at Brookfield State School are this year's Catchment Kids class, taking part in a number of fun activities and working on their performance for the final event in October. Year 6 and 7 students have been working on a bush tucker garden in the school grounds. Year 3-7 from Upper Brookfield State School are participating in the GOA Billboard competition, and the winner will have their billboard design put up around this area. Kenmore State High School has a number of environmental projects in progress, including the Student Streamsavers revegetation project along the creek at the end of Branton St, with plants growing well.

Just a reminder to check the catchment group website which is regularly updated with news, events and environmental information that you might find interesting.

Finally, many of you will already know I am expecting my first child in August 2010. I will be taking 12 months leave from July 16th but a replacement Creek Ranger will take my place over this time. The best contact after I leave will be the general MCCG email – mccgroup@live.com.au – which can then be re-directed to the appropriate person.

Shelley Dunlop

School Success Celebrated - And the Hunt is on for the 2010 Winners

Members will recall that in 2009 MCCG launched a Schools Photography competition, open to schools within the catchment or the Pullenvale Ward. This is in addition to our popular photography competition which is open to individual entries. Cr Margaret de Wit attended an assembly of Upper Brookfield State School to present the students with the Lord Mayor's Perpetual Schools Shield for their winning entry (Dr Bruce Flegg MP had previously presented the school with \$100 toward school library resources as part of their prize). Fittingly, the March 2010 presentation took place at the final assembly of Mr. Bruce Robertson as Principal of the School, which gave him the opportunity to congratulate his students on their production of a number of photographs focused on environmental issues. The presentation also marked the launch of the 2010 Schools competition. In congratulating the school, Cr de Wit challenged the students to "start snapping" as the 2010 competition entries would be due by the end of August. She added that she hoped the students would "rise to the challenge of seeing the name of their school appearing on the Shield in future years".

Geoff Lawrence

(Pictured page 1, left to right: Nathan Simon and Madi Kenny accepting the Shield from Cr. Margaret de Wit.)

Status of the leaf-sucking tingid (*Carvalhotingis visenda*) introduced as a biocontrol agent for cat's claw creeper

K. Dhileepan

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The leaf-sucking tingid (*Carvalhotingis visenda*) is the first biological control agent approved for release against cat's claw creeper (*Macfadyena unguis-cati*) in Australia. The mass-rearing and field releases of it commenced in May 2007 and continued till December 2009. Potted cat's claw plants infested with tingid adults and nymphs were field released; either by placing the pots on the ground or by planting them in the soil, in infested sites.

Field releases were made from northern NSW in the south to Mackay in northern Queensland, and from Nerang and other coastal sites in the east to Taroom in the west, covering both riparian and non-riparian sites. Alan Fletcher Research Station released more than half a million individuals at 72 sites in Queensland and New South Wales. The Gympie Landcare group released over 11,000 infested plants at 63 sites in Queensland on a commercial basis.

The tingids survived and reproduced throughout the year, including winter, and there was no evidence of winter diapause. Establishment of the tingid was evident at 80% of the release sites after three years, spanning a range of climatic conditions, from sub-tropical northern NSW to tropical north Queensland and arid western Queensland. Establishment was dependent on the number of individuals released, as well as the number of releases made at each site. Hence, future efforts should focus on redistributing the tingid regularly from the established sites to release sites where field establishment is yet to be confirmed.

The tingid caused severe and visible feeding damage, mostly at ground level (photo p 5). In the field, the tingid spread slowly. The spread was mostly horizontal at ground level, less vertically on plants climbing trees. The maximum distance of tingid incidence away from the initial release points ranged from 6 m to around 1 km. This highlights that the tingid during initial stages of establishment could be more effective in reducing the vigour of cat's claw plants at ground level.

It is only three years since the tingid was first released in Australia, and it may take several years before higher population levels are attained. Due to this slow dispersal, future efforts should be focused on releasing more individuals in the field as well as redistributing the tingid from established sites to other areas by local community groups.

A Koala!

I have seen a Koala! I was out jogging in the morning along Haven Road when, on my home stretch, I heard a noise, and then saw something coming down a tree. I thought "wow, this is a big possum" before realising it is the wrong time of day for a possum. I stopped abruptly, mid jog, as it dawned on me that what I saw was: a Koala. A determined little Koala, as it turned out. It looked at me and at the same time ignored me completely, in the way only Koalas do. It then crossed the road right in front of me. I felt calm and happy, and the world around me had turned completely quiet. Truly one of the most amazing moments in my life. It's not that I hadn't seen Koalas before, but never so close (in the wild), and never SO CLOSE TO HOME! I was drunk with the extraordinariness of it all. As the Koala reached the other side it stopped in front of one of the trees, looked up, then touched it; but apparently it wasn't the right kind of tree. It then moved on to another tree and repeated the procedure: looked up, touched it. This one was the "right" tree and with some forceful jumps - much faster than I thought possible for a Koala - hauled him (her?)self up the trunk and wedged its little bum into a low fork. After some more stunned gazing on my part, I left it there in perfect view, and raced home to get a camera.

Ulrike Zimmermann



◀ Tingid damage (see Status etc., p. 4)
Photo: Author



Weeds (see Weeds in waiting, p. 7) ▶
Photo: Dale Borgelt



▲ ▶
Melia (L.), Koelreuteria (R) mature leaves

Melia (L) and Koelreuteria (R) seedling leaves, (see Two similar trees.p. 7) ▶
Photos: Bryan Hacker



Pest Plant Eradication Notices

Several MCCG Committee members held discussions with BCC officers Bill Manners (Principal Officer, Natural Environment) and Craig Pillay (Team Leader, BCC Compliance and Regulatory Services) on 5 March. Their visit to the Cottage was in response to a letter of concern written to the Council regarding Pest Plant Eradication Notices, as explained in the Chairman's Report in our Autumn 2010 Newsletter.

While we support the Council's aim to reduce weed infestation in our district, we consider the tone of the Notices to be threatening and intimidating, involving potential hefty fines for non-compliance. Amongst other issues, we also pointed out the widespread weed infestations on Council land and suggested the Ipswich Council model, whereby subsidies may be provided to landholders for controlling environmental weeds, has merits.

The Council officers agreed to re-word the Notices, but it is not clear when this might come into effect. Regarding weed control on public land, they stated that some \$2.5 million is spent on weed control on public land, but in the future they would focus attention on public lands where notices were being delivered. (It is to be hoped that such weed control avoids damage to the valued native flora in our district). The option of a subsidy was rejected; it was considered that provision of a plan for weed control was adequate.

Bryan Hacker

Gap Creek Wildlife Corridor for Birdwing Butterflies

Thanks to an Australian Government Envirofund grant and Brisbane City Council support, members of the Moggill Creek Catchment Group and the Richmond Birdwing Recovery Network have collaborated over the last two years on a large-scale restoration project along Gap Creek. Thanks to this project, the connectivity and habitat quality of the Gap Creek Wildlife Corridor have been greatly improved.

A major component of the project was restoration work on the public land along the creek. In total, around three-quarters of a hectare of weed trees including Camphor Laurel, Privet and Chinese Elm, comprising about 150 mature trees was cleared and mulched. In addition, over two hectares of public land in the corridor saw manual maintenance and weed removal work by community members. Hundreds of locally native plants were installed in place of the weed trees.

On private land, twenty landholders adjoining the corridor have put in thousands of hours clearing weedy undergrowth along the creek, planting hundreds of native plants (donated by the MCCG nursery) and removing large weed trees. One major highlight of the project has been the willingness of the landholders to get involved on their own properties to ensure continuous habitat along the creek on both public and private land. Their enthusiasm bodes well for future weed control and maintenance along the corridor.

So far, 104 Richmond Birdwing Butterfly Vines have been planted throughout this corridor, some of these on a demonstration trellis in the public park off Brookfield Road (opposite the tennis courts). It is hoped these vines, along with the restoration of native habitat in the corridor, will encourage the Butterflies to return to the area. Thanks to the assistance of Don Webster, a plaque recognising the work of all partners in the project has been installed at the trellis site. (A photo of this and part of the trellis is shown on p 1).

The project faced some challenges, such as staff and volunteer turnover and the destruction of some planting areas by the floods of November 2008 and May 2009, including the loss of about 60 butterfly vines. However, thanks to a great deal of volunteer effort in clearing debris and recovering or replacing the plants, the restoration of the corridor had been a great success. The Gap Creek Bushcare group will be responsible for maintaining and extending the restoration corridor – please get in touch if you would like to volunteer!

Shelley Dunlop

The MCCG 2010 Annual Platypus Survey

This year our 6th annual platypus survey will be conducted on Sunday 1st August. All the usual fun and games apply; a thermos, a blanket, a chair and a position beside the creek before dawn to look for platypus, followed by a hearty breakfast at the Brookfield Hall.

To register your participation, please contact Liz Snow by Friday 23rd July.
lizsnow@optusnet.com.au Phone 3374 3453.

Two similar trees – one native and the other a weed

The native tree white cedar (*Melia azedarach*) and the weed tree known as golden rain tree (*Koelreuteria elegans*) are easily distinguished when in flower or fruit but are not easy to tell apart at other times. They are similar in form and both species have large, bipinnate leaves (see page 5)

White cedar is a deciduous tree with pretty mauve flowers in spring, followed by roundish fruit 10-15 mm long that turn yellow when ripe. In some areas of our catchment it is probably one of our commonest pioneer trees, readily establishing on infertile soils in eucalypt woodlands. In contrast, golden rain tree, originally from Taiwan and southern China, has large clusters of small yellow flowers later in the year, followed by papery, 3-winged pink fruit about 4 cm long.

The following table provides features by which the trees may be distinguished when not in flower or seed:

	White cedar	Golden rain tree
Trees		
Leaf rachis (leaf stalk)	Unbranched	Often forked at end
Leaflets	Most opposite	Most alternate
Seedlings/ young plants		
Growing points	Green	Reddish
Leaflets	Most opposite	Most alternate

Leaflets being opposite or alternate is the clearest attribute to distinguish the trees, as shown in the photographs (page 5). Looking for an acronym as an 'aide memoire' I thought OCAR (pronounced as in 'ocker'!) might do – Opposite Cedar Alternate Raintree.

Bryan Hacker

Weed seeds in waiting

In developing the Cottage Garden, beds were marked out, sprayed with glyphosate to kill grass and a few weeds and then covered with a thick layer of mulch, all that happening about a year ago. Planting involves clearing back the mulch followed by breaking up the soil where the plant is to go, planting occurring on a future suitable occasion.

A recent planting followed a long delay after site preparation. The photo on p.5 shows the dense crop of weeds which had arrived, thanks to the rather typical abundance of seeds which lie dormant in the soil, for perhaps long periods, germinating in response to stimuli arising from the new conditions. This was no worry to our gardening but was a nice demonstration of what can happen in revegetation activities, something not appreciated by too many people.

Planting requires at least soil disturbance in the immediate vicinity of the plant, but is often carried out following extensive clearing of a large area. Inevitably, what happened in our Garden site will happen there unless provision is made for its avoidance, which can be achieved by mulching or application some sort of matting on disturbed areas. Of course some form of continuing weed removal can be practised but that is unwelcome hard work.

Quite apart from disturbance associated with planting, it is not uncommon to see landholders using machinery to clear out understorey vegetation for some reason or other without being aware of consequences in the absence of planned ongoing management. They may well see a result less desirable than what they saw fit to remove in the first place.

Graeme Wilson

As it was

I moved to Brookfield in 1950 and was delighted to find a stretch of Moggill Creek curving along the base of the hill sloping down from my property. The photo on p 1 (taken in 1952) is of the Junction Hole, the confluence of Moggill and Gold Creeks, alongside what is now Bundaleer St. It was a popular swimming hole, with clear water, and a site for family picnics. For hundreds of metres upstream, Moggill Creek was a string of pools of varying size, some quite lengthy and connected by fast-running stretches, the whole thing quite beautiful. The water was clear and the bottom clean gravel beds or rock. My children learned to swim in it.

Alas, no longer. Why?

Many things contribute to the deterioration, including: Slopes cleared of significant vegetation causing rapid runoff of rain exacerbating flooding, carrying surface soil which silts streams and reducing penetration of water at the expense of springs on which the continuing flow of streams depends; earthworks resulting in exposed soil which moves to waterways, often in large amounts with heavy rain; excessive and in some cases illegal pumping from creeks; runoff of herbicides, fertilizers, outflows from poorly maintained septic systems and outputs from domestic stock; absence of adequate strips of riparian vegetation which intercept pollutants; and access of livestock to creeks, breaking down banks; and destruction of vegetation which stabilizes banks.

By definition, all land in our Catchment contributes to Moggill Creek. Are you one of our landholders?

Graeme Wilson

Help wanted

Our patch: We are the Lower Moggill Creek Bushcare Group which works on the section of the creek bordering the park at the end of Fortrose Street, Kenmore (where the sewage pumping station is). This park is spacious with a children's playground. Platypus sightings have been made in the creek.

When the creek is in flood the area becomes a fast running waterway with major local flooding. This has damaged much of the restoration previously done as well as flooding local houses. Logs used in landscaping further up the creek become missiles, roaring down and knocking over and damaging trees and shrubs along the banks.

Our Group: It's very small, just a few people mainly from families living in the area. (photo on p 1 of a couple of workers). We need and would welcome new helpers. We meet on the third Sunday of each month from 8.30 to 11.30 am, with a break for morning tea, and have a great Christmas Barbeque every year to reward our workers.

Our aim: To replant our area with natives, and in a way that limits flood damage to the creek banks and planting the flood path with grass-like species. We also intend to make access spaces which allow people to reach the creek, that enhancing features of the park.

Contact: Judy Petroeschovsky at 3378 3348 for further information.

Cottage Talk

COTTAGE TALK ON JUNE 17 is about Reproduction in Plants

10am- noon Thursday 17th June, Graeme Wilson will give us an insight into plant reproduction. Don't miss it. Book your place early by contacting Dale 3374 1035 or daleborgelt@gmail.com

Plants bring Butterflies

Our MCCG Cottage garden of native plants is bringing butterflies. Recently an extremely friendly Leafwing, *Dolichotylus bisulcatus* (photo p 1), seemed to be following Graeme all around the garden. It obviously appreciated the planting of its larval foodplant the Loveflower, *Pseuderanthemum variable*.

Kuta Koala Nature Refuge: Good News for our Catchment's Koalas

An unknown number of koalas inhabit the Moggill Creek Catchment. During the recent breeding season of 2009/2010, koala sightings were reported in Chapel Hill, Kenmore, Kenmore Hills, Brookfield and Upper Brookfield. Some sightings were on well vegetated properties, some on properties in close proximity to Mt. Coot-tha Forest and some in the Forest itself.

The Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) has now recognised the important presence of koalas in our western suburbs by way of mapping many of our catchment's areas as koala habitat. The MCCG is delighted to report that one of our Brookfield members in Boscombe Rd has recently been successful in becoming 'Kuta Koala Nature Refuge' and rehabilitation work will commence soon to further enhance their property for koalas. Weeds will be removed and additional koala food trees such as Tallowood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*) and Small-fruited grey gum (*Eucalyptus propinqua*) will be planted.

DERM's Koala Nature Refuges Program offers financial incentives targeted at private landowners to take action to personally contribute to the protection of koalas in south-east Queensland. Landholders whose properties are within mapped medium or high value koala habitat can apply to become a Koala Nature Refuge.

More offers will be forthcoming from DERM but first check on the website to see if your property qualifies. (http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildlifeecosystems/wildlife/koalas/koala_crisis_response_strategy/index.html).

(Since receiving the above, we are advised that another property has been added.)