

# MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

www.moggillcreek.org.au



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## NEWSLETTER

## SUMMER 2015



Kids Day (See p. 8)  
Photos: Dale Borgelt

◀ Children making jewellery

▼ Girl and Stick Insect



◀ Brisbane's 2016 Wild West Calendar  
(See p. 2)



▲ *Zeuccina oblonga* (See p. 7)  
Photo: Jan Grigg



◀ Revegetation progress (See p. 4)  
Photo: Linda Fullerton

## Editorial

*As always, we are worried about the weather. Will we have heavy rain leading to floods damaging creeks and creekside vegetation or droughts destroying a year's planting? But now we are seeing a new problem. It is becoming difficult to deny that climate change is occurring. There are extreme weather/climate events worldwide as predicted. Accompanying that are biological changes, seen here conspicuously in reproductive behavior in plants but also occurring in animal distribution. How could that be caused except by weather/climate?*

*If that is so, we have to rethink what we are doing; viz restoring what was here. A changed environment requires changed species. And going further, adjacent areas may have species no longer suited to the location. Should we offer them the opportunity to find suitable "homes" here? Does all this mean that we will have to be more liberal in choice and tolerance of species?*

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*

## Brisbane's Wild West Calendar, 2016

This beautiful 2016 Calendar, including several photographs taken by MCCG members, is now available – see photo on page 1 . **Cost is \$12.50 each, and \$8.80 for postage within Australia** (1-3 calendars appropriately packaged).

For your copy, contact *Joanna* on 3374 4703.

Stocks are limited, so don't wait! To avoid postage costs you can arrange to pick up your copies from my house, 41 Gap Creek Road.

## Chairman's Report

Another successful photography Competition has come and gone thanks to the excellent efforts of the committee ably led by Patrick McMaster. This year we were very pleased to see more of the outstanding entries from Schools and young people.

A photo taken by Tony Watts, "Making Waves" was judged to be the best photo of the show, but there were many high quality shots on show that made the choice a difficult one. Kenmore South State School won the Lord Mayor's Perpetual Shield in the schools section for their entry "Water- Source of Life". Congratulations to all who entered!

Earlier this year, the art students at St James College, Brisbane voted to donate some of the proceeds of their forthcoming art exhibition to the Moggill Creek Catchment Group. They had clearly done their research and were impressed by what they read on our website. In meeting them I was told that they saw us as a group who "did things for the environment". I was greatly heartened to hear this as I often prattle on about our ability to do the work rather than just talk about it. To the art students at St James College, please accept a very sincere "Thank You!"

The Show raised a little over \$200 and we will put that to good use and report on the outcome.

Warren Hoey

## Muttonwood - *Myrsine variabilis*

Muttonwood is one of the more frequently encountered small trees in our district, occurring in dry vine scrubs and moister eucalypt forests. I planted one perhaps 40 years ago on my ridgetop block and it has survived tough conditions; I have spotted quite a few seedlings but they seem to be very slow-growing.

As its name suggests, muttonwood is extremely variable and in earlier publications was known as *Rapanea variabilis*. It is a tree to 12m tall with alternate leaves to 10cm long and 3cm wide, glossy on the upper surface. Leaf margins are entire or with irregularly prickly teeth, the prickles being especially evident in seedlings and young plants (see photos on p.5).

Flowers are tiny, about 2mm across, cream-coloured, borne in clusters in leaf axils, these followed by 4-6 mm diameter fruit which are almost spherical and blue in colour when ripe. In addition to seedlings closely associated with seeding plants, root suckers are formed, so that small dense groups of muttonwood can occur. According to internet sources, its fruit are commonly eaten by fruit doves, lorikeets and fig birds. Other species of *Myrsine* considered to be native to our catchment are *M. angusta* and *M. howittiana* (brush muttonwood).

Muttonwood is a native species occurring naturally from southern NSW to north Queensland. One wonders how it got its common name – it seems unlikely it had any value as timber!

Bryan Hacker

## Fireweed is Invading Brookfield and Neighbouring Suburbs!

Fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*) is a plant with pretty yellow flowers like those of a daisy, which seems quite recently to have made its appearance in our area, occurring along roadsides and in pastures. Fireweed was probably accidentally introduced from South Africa, first appearing in Australia in the Hunter Valley in 1918. It was first recorded in South-east Queensland in 1984. Once established, it spreads rapidly. Fireweed is a Class 2 declared pest plant under Queensland legislation, implying that it "can have adverse economic, environmental and social impacts". It is toxic to cattle and horses causing illness and slow growth and even leading to their death. Horses are particularly susceptible. Fireweed contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids that cause liver damage to livestock. All parts of the plant are toxic and young animals are most at risk of being poisoned.

Fireweed is a well-branched annual or short-lived perennial growing to a height of about 50 cm. Bright yellow daisy-like flowers with about 13 'petals' about 8 mm long appear from April to September (Photo on p5) Leaves are long and narrow, with irregularly toothed margins. Fireweed produces hundreds of small, fluffy seeds that blow in the wind.

Small outbreaks of fireweed are best controlled by hand – best to wear gloves. Try to remove plants before seeding occurs and be sure to bag for disposal. For large infestations, AFFRAY 300, Amicide® 625, Hotshot®, Grazon® Extra and Bromicide® 200 have been recommended,

Bryan Hacker

## A Landholder's Experience

Unidentified large birds causing a commotion near the top of a gum tree brought out the binoculars. This failed to identify the birds, but drew a large grey lump into focus. It can't be a koala...? It was.

In August 2010, this heralded the start of our journey with revegetation. A wildlife volunteer came to check on the koala, and introduced us to the Land for Wildlife program. It didn't start well as having two horses on the bottom third of our 1 ha block prevented our joining it and our new found enthusiasm ended abruptly following a visit by a Council officer ("Oh, you have Mother of Millions"), when we received a somewhat threatening letter; apparently we harboured a long list of errant species that had to be dealt with.

Almost a year of wearisome weekends, backache, several thousand dollars and a hernia operation later, I chanced upon a Land for Wildlife stall at Moggill Market. Driven by our lack of success in defeating the running bamboo, I overcame my reluctance to engage with Council officers, and tentatively enquired about more successful methods of control. In the ensuing conversation it transpired that, horses now relocated, we could join the program before the weeds were eliminated and that Council would *help* us.

We soon signed up and also joined Moggill Creek Catchment Group, of which we have been enthusiastic members ever since. I also hasten to add that I cannot speak too highly of our Land for Wildlife officer.

Released from the burden of compliance with the Council weed control order, and given not only freedom to plant, but also the promise of free plants for a nominal membership fee, I cleared out the back of the car and gleefully set off for the MCCG nursery. Armed with my first 200 native plants from the very helpful and patient Bryan Hacker, I embarked upon the sizeable task of transforming our plot into a haven for koalas.

Probably the best approach would have been to clear the ground first and plan what to plant where. However on the recoil from a year of unending weed removal, I worked where I felt like it and, on the grounds that a real forest would be so, planted somewhat randomly. The photo on page 1 shows one such patch under way.

My general approach is to clear enough grass to make a growing space, then reward myself by planting a tree. Most of the time the spade penetrates little more than a centimetre or two in our dry, hard, silty soil, so I use what I call the chip and soak method:

1. Chip out as much as you can with a sharp spade.
2. Fill with water.
3. Come back later and repeat.
4. This process can take a few days until the hole is deep enough, and I have to confess the desired at-least-twice-the-pot-depth is usually only achieved after a week's worth of rain. This may have caused the loss of a few more plants than would have otherwise but at least I still have some use of my shoulder!

Our biggest problem, apart from the running bamboo, which now looks as if it has finally succumbed to *Task Force*, has been introduced grasses. Green panic and signal are the worst offenders, also Rhodes. A desire to avoid herbicide (surely all those chemicals end up in our food eventually?) and the concrete like soil over most of the plot has had its challenges.

Other significant issues have been asparagus fern, hand pulled as much as possible, treated with glyphosate where not, and purple succulent, dealt with by burying. Initially this was by covering with black plastic but, horrified on discovering it disintegrated in the sun, adding to the burgeoning problem of micro-plastic in our watercourses. I now use only cardboard, old sheets and carpet. Less widespread are agaves, removal of which is delegated to my husband.

At a guess I have probably planted over 2,000 native plants, mostly courtesy of MCCG with a smaller number from Land for Wildlife. Most of these have been eucalypts, in the hope of a return visit of the koala, and native grasses but also a variety of other trees and plants suitable for a dry eucalypt forest. Some natural growth has occurred as well, mainly acacias and 'soap ash' trees, also eucalypts, grass: 'barbed wire' and 'windmill' and vines.

I have learnt a great deal from my hands on experience, and wisdom imparted from Bryan and former fellow MCCG Cottage weeders, where in-between jobs I spent a few months of Monday afternoons. I applaud MCCG for its commitment to both conservation of our wildlife and native bushland and the help and support it offers its members. It must be the most supportive and best value for money organisation around.

Linda Fullarton



Mutton Wood (See p. 3)  
 Photos: Bryan Hacker

◀ Fruit  
 Seedling  
 ▼



Fireweed flower (see p. 3) Photos: Bryan Hacker

▼



▲  
*Elaeocarpis grandis*

Bush Tucker Garden (See p. 6)  
 Photos: Bryan Hacker

Award ▶



## Roundup

I have seen an email which came to MCCG and stated simply “I was a member for several years, but just withdrew because of the use of Roundup in the catchment.” This presumably means that MCCG promoted its use. It is true that years ago, unaware of the hazards of its indiscriminate use, we gave it free to members. However in 2007 we published in the Autumn issue an article written by Andrew Wilson showing that much had already been learned, and then in the 2012 Summer issue Bryan Hacker wrote further on the subject. It is not the intention here to update what was known then and weed controllers interested should read those articles before reaching for their spray equipment.

We (the authors of this) say here what we do and what we give thought to. In the first place, we have one valuable use for glyphosate, as do many others. It is the application of concentrate to stumps following cutting or as stem injection, taking care to avoid spillage to the soil. Application to the soil is known to cause damage of some kinds with no convincing evidence of other effects which might be possible. It can directly damage roots near the soil surface.

The makers state that glyphosate is inactivated soon after contact with soil. That may be so in that it may not damage plants directly but does so indirectly. It has been recorded to destroy micro-organisms (fungi and bacteria) which are important in the mineral nutrition of plants. It is said to kill worms whose turning over and opening up of the soil are important in retention and increase of fertility but that remains to be confirmed. The moral of all this is that contact of glyphosate with soil is to be avoided as far as possible. The literature on soil effects is dominated by agricultural (cropping) use where repeated application and the use of GM species are involved, and is largely critical but is probably irrelevant to our situations.

We have so many situations varying in amount and species of both weeds and natives and have to decide in each situation what is best to do. At one limit is a dense, pure stand of herbaceous weeds where spraying can be done, but only lightly to minimize soil contact and wet only the upper part of the foliage which is sufficient to kill most species. If there are a few species requiring full wetting, they can be hand-pulled later. Where however the species largely or wholly require wetting, we might shift our strategy away from herbicide to introducing tall shrubs and trees which usually suppress the weeds, leaving them for necessary attention later. Where there is a mixture of weeds and natives, an assessment has to be made depending on the proportions. The natives may be so few that they can be sacrificed. With sufficient labour, surrounding weeds can be handpulled, followed by very careful spraying or as above, shading employed.

Following examples in the previous paragraph, we can only repeat what was said in the article of 2007 referred to above, that “it is a matter of horses for courses”. You have to combine each situation with what you know and time available. And of course a genuine desire to achieve the required outcomes.

*Andrew & Graeme Wilson*

## Our Bush Tucker Garden needs some friends!

Did you know that in 2006 MCCG won an award which supported the establishment of a Bush Tucker Garden? This is located behind Brookfield Produce and has done surprisingly well over the intervening nine years, despite a major weed problem, largely caused by glycine. Of the 27 species planted, 16 have survived, with most thriving. The most impressive is the blue quandong, *Elaeocarpus grandis*, which is now more than 7m tall – see photo on p. 5.

However, our Bush Tucker Garden needs some help. Brookfield Produce is supportive of our concerns to restore the Bush Tucker Garden and we are looking for a small team of ‘friends’ to keep up maintenance weeding and perhaps a little planting too. All being well, the grass area along the front of the garden will be mown at intervals; this encourages people to view the garden and learn to identify some of our bush tucker plants. If you would be interested in helping, do contact me (3374 1468) and we can talk things through.

*Bryan Hacker*

## Another low profile worker

Well, Bruce Siemon is hardly unseen by those working at the Nursery, being largely responsible for seeing that the potting operations proceed correctly. But behind the scenes he maintains data bases recording all nursery activity and site visits by Bryan Hacker (our Field Officer), information which is useful to us. This is all part of the many bits and pieces on which we are dependent to maintain progress to attaining our objectives

## Photography Competition 2015

The October 2015 display of photographs entered in the MCCG Photography competition proved a resounding success. Hundreds of votes were cast for the people's choice prizes, the stand volunteers were inundated with visitors (some of whom joined as new members), and there were compliments from the sponsors, retailers, and Kenmore Village customers.

**New sponsors:** Our long-standing donors and supporters were joined by new category sponsors *Aussie Beaver Chipping* and *Kenmore Fresh*. I would encourage all members to thank our sponsors—particularly if you are a customer or have contact with our donors. The photography competition is an important event in the local community, and is a great way in which the MCCG can 'advertise' its presence. But without the support of all of our sponsors, it just would not take place. So sincere thanks also go to *Halfway Tree Photography*, *Brookfield Produce & Pet Pavilion*, *Steve Parish*, *Westside Printing*, *Moggill Constructions*, *Kenmore Shopping Village*, *Water Solutions*, *The Local Bulletin*, *Cr Margaret de Wit*, and *The Pet Chalet*.

**More entries from local schools & children:** Cr Margaret de Wit has been a long-term supporter of the MCCG, noting with some sadness that 2015 is the last year that she will be attending the prize ceremony as the local councillor. So it was great to see that this year the School's Competition (introduced with the support of Cr de Wit, this year with a total of \$350 presented to local schools) attracted entries from 4 local schools. Congratulations to the two winning schools: Kenmore State High School and Kenmore South State School. Thanks also to the parents and teachers who supported some really fantastic and creative entries from many local children. It was great to see the growth in entries from children in both age categories.

**Help needed:** The photography committee is actively seeking new members. who can give some time to help organise the event for 2016 (and beyond?)—particularly as some of our members are unable to continue with their roles. Meetings are limited in number and quite social, so it's an enjoyable way to contribute to the MCCG. An interest in photography helps, but is not essential. Why not drop us an email? We'd really love to hear from you.

Thanks again to the enthusiastic **Robyn, Margaret, Bruce, Jocelyn, Dale** and **Patrick**.

*Geoff Lawrence (mccgphoto@gmail.com)*

## Powerful Owl

Those familiar with the call of the powerful owl may hear it at night where there is a good stand of vegetation. They may just get a glimpse of it moving. Moreover, they may see the remains of an animal it has captured, usually a glider's tail.

A couple of our members were recently exploring in a remote part of our catchment and were surprised to see, in full daylight, a powerful owl accompanied by a chick, perched on a branch. One can only suppose that these birds were safely in their "home", away from the intrusion of man and his non-natural activities and noise, and from which they left at night on their hunting forays, coming to our notice.

As a policy, we do not reveal the locations we have found for rarely seen birds because such would lead to intrusion by bird-watchers to make sightings, destroying the seclusion.

*Graeme Wilson*

## Good News – Bad News

During our last Section 9 Working Bee we discovered some small plants that we had never seen before. Our first thoughts were "Yet another new weed!" They were insignificant to look at, with a few soft green leaves at the base of an immature 25 cm flower stalk. We had to wait until the flowers opened before we identified it as a ground orchid, *Zeuxine oblonga*, found on page 382 of "Mangroves to Mountains". This species is not so far listed on the MCCG plant list. See photo on page 1.

It was satisfying to realise that the rainforest we planted there 15 years ago has provided a suitable habitat for more delicate species.

**The bad news:** they are quite inconspicuous, and surrounded and outnumbered by seedlings of cats claw creeper and other weeds that invite control by spraying with herbicide.

**P. R. Offier's Notices**  
**MARK IN YOUR 2016 CALENDAR**

**2016 Kids' Day At The Cottage**

**Sunday 29th MAY 2016**

**10am – 1pm**

Mark it on your calendar, because all our popular FREE favourite activities and attractions will be there for kids to enjoy. Plus we will have dedicated space for Martin's wonderful wildlife presentations throughout the time, rather than one big show. Photos on p1 are of children enjoying 2015 Kids' Day.

**Reminder about Memberships for 2016**

**2016 Memberships are now due unless you have recently joined or renewed.**

**2016 Renewal forms are enclosed with this Newsletter to existing members offering an option of paying by direct deposit.**

(People wishing to join for the first time need to fill out a New Member application form available online at [www.moggillcreek.org](http://www.moggillcreek.org) and send to: The Secretary, MCCG, PO Box 657, Kenmore, QLD 4069.)

**NEWSFLASH for Members re Talks at the Cottage**

In 2016 we will be moving away from the regular Talks at the Cottage on the Third Thursday of each month, to a variable timetable for these presentations. Space will still usually limit attendance to members and make booking essential. Here are the exciting offerings at the Cottage for February and March 2016:

**10am Saturday 20th February      Recording Wildlife sightings with Brent Smith**

Brent has experience in zoo keeping, wildlife management, and most recently threatened species survey and habitat creation, but he is especially interested in ways that the general public can monitor and record the things they appreciate in their own backyard.

There is so much potential for the catchment group to encourage and facilitate the entering of wildlife data on official websites. There is even an app for phones and i-pads that can take data and knows location gps.

There is a lot that has gone unrecorded for our bit of Australia, let alone our catchment. eg only 3 sightings of Mountain Brushtail Possum for Brisbane, no sightings of Greater Glider anywhere near our area, no recording of echidna in our catchment.

**A dusk watch of microbats near the Cottage with Dr Roger Coles in March**

Tentatively booked for 5pm Thursday 17th March 2016, Dr Roger Coles will be doing an evening on-site show and tell on bats in the area for us. Because this is outside the Cottage, we can have lots more people, but booking is absolutely essential.

**To book for Cottage Talks contact [daleborgelt@gmail.com](mailto:daleborgelt@gmail.com) or ring 3374 1035**

*Dale Borgelt*