

MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

www.moggillcreek.org.au



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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2016



▲ Volunteers at Brookfield Show MCGG members
Sally Stinton, Ian Hancock and Adrienne Forrestal explaining the display to Show visitors (see p. 7)
Photo: Dale Borgeldt



▲ William (see MCGG Stand at 2016 Brookfield Show) p. 7
Photo: Dale Borgeldt



▲ Kenmore South School Category Winner MCGG Photographic Competition 2015
(see p. 7)
Photo: Dale Borgeldt



▲ An Industrious Caterpillar (see p. 4)
Photo: Bryan Hacker

Editorial

Although the formation of MCCG was a purely local initiative, relationships soon developed with BCC, especially via Bush Care and thus what we do is influenced by that. The LFW program is responsible for a stand-alone contribution to our last Newsletter. This brings us back to our long-standing problem of sources of contributions. Very rarely indeed do we receive something not expected. The rest comes from regular contributors or persons whom we have persuaded. In conversation with members, they often mention something of interest to us. Why don't they convert it to words?

It may not be something for Editorials of the future but has potential. Two BCC members with responsibility for Environment approached us for a visit to discuss aspects of what we do. My memory does not recall such having happened before. If it does, we may have at long last someone in Council with whom we can discuss matters of interest to us, and such in turn may come back to the Newsletter.

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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Chairman's Report

The questions of what has happened to Autumn and what might happen to Winter and what might this mean for our local environment occupy me in quieter moments which unfortunately are few. At the end of a day I enjoy sitting outside my shed and watching the comings and goings of the wildlife (mainly birds) and examining the plants (mainly trees and shrubs) more closely. The late flowering of certain Cassias and one or two of my flame trees (*Brachychiton acerifolium*) alongside the yellowing leaves of the poison peach (*Trema aspera*) and the peanut tree (*Sterculia quadrifida*) are a lovely contrast but seem to be an unusual occurrence. I'd be grateful for an explanation.

We are heading into a busy part of the year with the Brookfield Show and the Kid's Day at the Cottage ahead where we expect considerable interest from visitors and members alike. We look forward to seeing you at these important events. The Photography Competition is next, just around the corner and then it's Xmas!

This year we are also reviewing the projects and activities we have undertaken since the last review in 2011. The result will be an evaluation, a strategic plan and a business plan for the years ahead. It's important that we do this so that our enthusiasm to do good environmental works best matches our talents and abilities with the needs of the catchment. It makes good sense to sit back a little and look dispassionately at our work and in the process, talk to other Individuals and organisations with a keen interest in the Moggill Creek Catchment.

Warren Hoey

Carissa

The great majority of our plant species occur in competition among themselves and therefore do not exhibit the potential which might be expressed in the absence of that competition. A striking example came to our notice in the case of Carissa ovata (Bush Cherry).

We had been asked to make a small planting of natives to screen Men's Shed West from the road and included three plants of bush cherry. In the wild it is often a weak climber, branches falling to the ground, the plant thus spreading. Foliage is sparse with thorns in the leaf axils. The photo on p. 5 shows the three plants facing the road. I am standing at the right hand limit. Those on the left extend far beyond the limit of the photo. They have coalesced, are densely foliated with the lowest branches lying on the ground, the tops above head height and still growing. Some of the upper branches have lost much leaf, probably eaten by grasshoppers. Well armed with their thorns they have become a formidable hedge.

It is tempting to see the possibility of using many species in open spaces in small gardens but some may be disappointing. Much of the scruffiness of bush-grown plants is due to leaf damage caused by leaf-eating insects, aphids, scales etc. Growing in isolation there is probably isolation from infection for some time but unlikely for ever. We do have several one-off species in our Cottage Garden which have been there for a few years, still looking good. It's worth a try.

Graeme Wilson

Are you possibly interested in joining the nursery working bee?

Occasionally we meet people who think they might like to join us. Would they either phone me (3374 1218) to discuss it or preferably visit the nursery on one of our regular working days, the first or third Monday of every month at about 10 pm. If this latter, check in advance with me to ensure there has been no change.

Graeme Wilson

Brushtail possums feeding

Our previous issue brought us up to date on the correct names for the local brushtail possums. We see many local animals going about their daily business, especially most birds but not some other animal groups. It is interesting to do so. Such is the case with our local possums when I came about seeing them doing so, having discovered a cherry guava tree about 3 metres high loaded in fruit. The bobucks' methods of harvesting changed as fruit was taken from lower on the branches to terminal poorly supported positions. They were indifferent to torches being closely shone in their eyes. The common possum however avoided being watched quickly enough so permitting us to see its technique, hanging by its tail with a wide swing which allowed reaching fruit in all positions on the branches and harvesting with all four "hands".

Graeme Wilson

Hygrophila

Hygrophila (*Hygrophila costata*) is a Class 1 weed species under the *Queensland Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*. It has been reported from comparatively few sites in southern Queensland but is considered to be a threat to native water plants. The plant photographed (page 5) was found in the riparian zone close to the Brookfield Road bridge across Moggill Creek, where it was surviving in a dense stand of the aggressive environmental weed *Ruellia tweediana*. I had not seen this species before, so took a specimen to the Queensland Herbarium, where it was identified. Despite a lengthy search, just a single plant was found, but it is likely that this would have been spread by floodwaters from further upstream.

Hygrophila is an herbaceous plant which grows on creek banks, also extending out over the water. It is up to 1 m tall, and has spreading stems which can root at the nodes. Leaves are opposite, 3-18cm long, 1-5cm wide, oblong to elliptic, coarse in texture, with prominent veins and a distinct midrib. Flowers are white or mauve, 7.5 – 10 mm long, and are produced in whorls in leaf axils towards the top of the stem.

This species is native from Mexico to Argentina. It should be noted that landholders are required by law to keep their land free of this pest. Hygrophila is also causing concern in north-eastern New South Wales

Bryan Hacker

An Industrious Caterpillar

Living in the bush, there is always something of interest to see. In April I spotted the structure shown in the photo on page 1, hanging from a palm leaf, and wondered what it was. It was 10 cm long and apparently carefully made from short twigs. On submitting an enquiry to the Queensland Museum via its website, I soon learnt that it was the pupal phase of a Case Moth. What particularly amazed me was that the caterpillar which had built the case had carefully tied together seventeen leaflets of the palm leaf. One wonders why this should have been necessary, as the rachis of the palm leaf should have provided ample support.

The Museum also kindly provided me with a link to a fact sheet on Case Moths. Apparently the larval stage can last for one or two years. There are many species, one of the commonest and largest in Queensland being Saunder's Case Moth. The fact sheet also indicated that the cases of different Case Moths are quite distinctive, and the size and form of the one in my photograph suggests that it could be the Saunder's Case Moth.

I will keep an eye on my Case Moth structure. Hopefully the inhabitant has not expired as a result of the exertion associated with tying up the palm leaflets!

Bryan Hacker



▲
Carissa (see p. 3)
Photo: Adrian Webb

Hygrophyla (see p. 4) ►
Photo: Bryan Hacker



◀ Tree
River oak (see p. 6)
Photos: Bryan Hacker

Branchlets
▼



A Landholder's Experience

We moved to Upper Brookfield around 22 years ago and started what we regarded as our garden with mostly mature eucalypts, lantana and more lantana, although we were fortunate to also have xanthorrhoea and cycads. Gradually we cleared and started planting. However growing up in the suburbs of another country I initially didn't have a clue and planted several species I later discovered were major pests or didn't survive.

With the discovery of MCCG and the talents of Dr Hacker and plants that I was unaware of, we began to have more success. Lomandra became one of my favourites for its sculptural look, stabilising effects and the impact of mass planting especially along driveways and paths. Bryan introduced me to many more plants which are now happily residing in my surrounds which are now properly known as bushland, although I still haven't a clue what most of them are. He is especially patient with my long list of requests; must have interesting foliage, form, colour, perfume, flowers and attract birds! A recent discovery of settlers flax will result in collected seed going to MCCG for propagation in its nursery.

Living on top of a ridge and having no access to water, I have developed a planting regime using water crystals mixed with Seasol, a plastic shelter for trees, a good watering in and the plants are on their own. With a higher attrition rate early on we now have around a 90% success rate by selecting species we know will survive combined with the planting system.

Glenys Cadman

River Oak

River oak, *Casuarina cunninghamiana*, is one of the more significant riparian trees in our catchment. The genus *Casuarina* and the closely related *Allocasuarina* both have a superficial resemblance to pine trees, although a close examination (see photo on page 5) shows that instead of 'needles', these genera have branchlets with whorls of tiny scale-like leaves at regular intervals. The botanical name *Casuarina* derives from a resemblance of the twigs to the plumage of the cassowary.

Branchlets are slightly furrowed and the leaves scale-like, 0.5mm long or less, in whorls of 8-10. River oak is dioecious – that is, with male and female trees, only the females bearing cones, these being woody and globose, 7-14 mm long.

River oak is found naturally from Victoria to north Queensland. It is reported to be an invasive species in the Florida Everglades and in parts of South Africa.

Like the legume family, river oak fixes atmospheric nitrogen. In the case of legumes, the partnership is with the bacterium *Rhizobium*, but in river oak the symbiotic relationship is with the nitrogen-fixing actinomycete (a fungus) *Frankia*. Where there are trees of this species in the vicinity, natural regeneration of seedlings is often abundant providing weed competition is controlled. Growth is very fast, trees attaining a height of 3-4 m in four years, this perhaps being associated with their ability to fix nitrogen.

Bryan Hacker

Water Pump Resources

MCCG has recently purchased a large Honda/Davey firefighting and water transfer pump. Also I have a 1000 litre Tilkey Tank on the back of my ute and a smaller 1 hp Honda pump, ideal to water plants. If anyone would like to borrow the water transfer pump or use my services to water your site, please contact me on 07 3374 0723, email jcrowley1255@gmail.com

John Crowley

MCCG Stand at 2016 Brookfield Show

A team of MCCG volunteers manned the MCCG tent over the 3 days at the 2016 Brookfield Show.

This year our displays mainly featured:

- Cat's Claw and other vine weeds that are serious threats to the natural environment in our catchment. There were a few worried frowns and commiserating mutters around this display.
- The promotion of Kids' Day at the Cottage. Many children enjoyed looking for themselves or familiar faces in the posters. Parents, as well as children, were happy to take flyers re Kids' Day on 12th June, especially when they knew all the attractions and activities were FREE.
- An invitation to help make a difference, join Moggill Creek Catchment Group. We had posters featuring ways to become involved such as Bushcare Groups, Plant Nursery, Cottage Talks and Creek Health Monitoring. A heading Are you thinking about retiring soon attracted a few wry smiles from our somewhat older brigade of loyal volunteers, but our brochure attracted new attention with its photos showing local volunteers actively engaged in protecting, restoring and celebrating our local bushland, waterways and wildlife. 10 new members joined on the spot at the Show.

Dale Borgelt

SCHOOL Category of Moggill Creek Catchment Group Photographic Competition 2016

Now is a good time for the Schools local to Moggill Creek Catchment or in the Pullenvale Ward to be thinking of an entry for the 2016 Photographic Competition in October.

A school entry is a titled set of 3 photos on a theme with a connection to the natural environment. Each participating school can only submit one set of 3 photos. The photographs must be the work of the students who can be of mixed or same age.

The winning school will be presented with the Lord Mayor's Perpetual Shield plus \$250 to spend on environment-focused resources.

At the Brookfield Show we handed out a brochure which gave clear answers to what, when, where and how questions about the School Category of the MCCG Photographic Competition 2016. For all the info and details email photography@moggillcreek.org

Dale Borgelt

KIDS' DAY AT THE COTTAGE 2016

SUNDAY 12th JUNE 10am -1pm

Note the date for **Kids' Day at the Cottage** has really been changed! It is now **Sunday 12th June**.

The date has been changed, but all the FREE fun activities and attractions will be there for kids to make and do, see and enjoy.

For example:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| *Art and Craft activities | * Make Jewellery to wear |
| *Pot a seedling to take home | *ID leaf shape of plants |
| *Talk to the Snail whisperer | *Look for camouflaged insects |
| *See a native bee hive working | *See display of local Dung Beetles |

*See furry, feathery, or leathery native creatures in one of Martin Fingland's **three** Geckoes Wildlife sessions this year at approx:

10am -10.40am 11am - 11.40 12noon - 12.40pm

And there is a lunchtime sausage sizzle

MCCG is happy to offer this 2016 Kids' Day at the Cottage event with all its attractions and activities for young people FREE, thanks especially to our volunteers and expert presenters, proudly supported by the Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative fund and the Pullenvale Ward Councillor, and the BCC Creek Catchment Program.

Many kids love coming to Kids' Day each year and William is just one I have caught on camera a few years. Once again William has co-operated happily to give a photo of a photo of etc. (Photo p.?) This time it was when he visited our MCCG display at the 2016 Brookfield Show - and he's looking forward to 2016 Kids' Day at the Cottage.

Kids' Day at the Cottage is on Sunday 12th June 10am – 1pm, at the Moggill Creek Catchment Group Cottage on the Gold Creek Dam Reserve at the very end of Gold Creek Road, Brookfield.

For more info contact daleborgelt@gmail.com

Dale Borgelt

Local Wildlife on Show

MONDAY 25 JULY at 7pm in BROOKFIELD HALL

Unchanged is our mid-year public meeting, Martin Fingland's presentation of Local Wildlife on Show in Brookfield Hall, 7pm - 8.30pm, on Monday 25th July.