Newsletter

July, 2025

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Gympie & District Landcare Group

NATIVE PLANTS THAT THRIVE IN WINTER

Want to know what native plants thrive in winter that you can get from our Nursery? Check out some of the below natives 😊

Indigofera australis (Native Indigo)

Acacia complanate (Flat Stemmed Wattle)

Hardenbergia violacea (Native sarsaparilla)

Presidents Message

THE QUIET BEAUTY OF WINTER GARDENING IN THE SUBTROPICS

Unlike the stark dormancy of colder climates, our subtropical winters are a season of quiet growth and soft abundance. Winter in the Gympie region offers a gentle pause, a breath of cool, crisp air that brings a subtle shift to the garden. The light softens, the humidity lifts, and the garden becomes a more forgiving space to work and wander.

Many native plants come into their own at this time of year, with paper daisies, grevilleas, and wattles bursting into colour, attracting bees, birds, and butterflies even in the cooler months. By planting with habitat in mind, gardeners can provide vital shelter and food for wildlife when resources are scarcer – flowering shrubs, dense foliage, and water sources all help create a safe haven for small creatures during winter.

There's a calm joy in tending the soil on a cool morning, with the sun low on the horizon and the scent of damp earth rising. Without the intensity of summer heat or storms, winter is the perfect time to plant, mulch, and quietly observe the life your garden supports.

It's also a wonderful time to visit the Gympie Landcare nursery, where you'll find seasonal native plants, expert advice, and fresh inspiration for making your garden a winter refuge for both people and wildlife. In the subtropics, winter isn't a time to retreat from the garden – it's a time to embrace its quiet magic.

Warm regards,

Alexandra van Beek

President, Gympie Landcare

Golden Wattle (Acacia-pycnantha)

TRAINEES GROW SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN CONSERVATION AND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Our Certificate I in Conservation and Ecosystem Management trainees are now over halfway through their six-month journey – and what a journey it has been! Through a mix of fieldwork, classroom learning, and real-world experience, trainees are gaining valuable skills and a deep appreciation for local ecosystems.

So far, they've explored a variety of natural landscapes including Amamoor State Forest, Maroochy Wetlands, and Seary's Creek, with more adventures ahead at Barambah Environmental Education Centre, Toolara Forest, and Gympie's Woodworks Museum. These field trips help connect classroom learning with on-ground conservation issues and practices.

Practical experience is a key part of the traineeship. In our nursery, trainees have honed their plant propagation skills, tackled weed management, and learned about irrigation, fertilising, and native species care. Out in the field, they've been planting, maintaining, and managing bushland ecosystems.

Trainees have also earned vital certifications, including First Aid and White Card, with the option to gain chainsaw and chemical handling tickets.

Guest speakers like Russell Bennet, a Kabi Kabi Elder, and a local wildlife carer from ANARRA, have further enriched their learning.

This program is not only about conservation – it's also about building confidence, communication skills, and job readiness for the future.

We will start recruiting for the next traineeship in July, so keep an eye on our Facebook page if you're interested or know of anyone who may be interested. This second traineeship will run from 1 Sept 2025 to 26 February 2026.

Marty and Elle with our Trainee's – enjoying a field trip in Messmate Park, Cooloola

NURSERY FIRE SALE

Our fire sale has started!!! And what a sale it is, with over 8,000 plants all heavily discounted to just $1- $2, or for the bigger pots only $5!!

We kicked it off on Tuesday the 1st July, with our Members' Only sale, which was a huge success. Another advantage of being a member 😊.

Then we opened it up to the public on Wednesday 2nd July and it will run through to Saturday 12th July. **So don't miss out – there's still time!**

There is still so much that must be cleared....

- Numerous plants are in various sizes of 50mm, 100mm and 200mm
- Koala species trees
- Timber trees
- Hedging Trees

... Just to name a few. Drop in and see, there are so many to choose from.

We also have many free trays and pots of various sizes should you need some.

And who doesn't love a **Lucky Door Prize.** Come and join the fun, every day we'll be having a Joker Draw.

To be eligible to enter you must make a purchase. The first one to draw the joker for the day wins.

The prize each day is a Landcare gift certificate valued at $20, which can be used to buy anything from our Nursery.

ECOSYSTEM REGENERATION AND BIODIVERSE GARDENING WORKSHOPS

Roll up your sleeves and join one of our dynamic one-day workshops where you'll gain hands-on skills to improve your own patch - whether it's a courtyard or 50 acres. Held over a weekend, one session is tailored for home gardeners keen to build beautiful, water-wise gardens that support local biodiversity, while the other is designed for lifestyle block owners looking to manage weeds and regenerate native bushland.

Each workshop features live demonstrations of best-practice regeneration and the power of native plants to create resilient, thriving landscapes. You'll leave ready to enhance your own property—and spark change in your local community.

The first workshops will run at Gympie Landcare in late August, with a second set likely in October. Stay tuned for confirmed dates and details!

Silent Custodians of the Forest Floor: The Role and Decline of Slugs and Snails in South East Queensland

Often overshadowed by more charismatic wildlife; slugs and snails play a vital but underappreciated role in the ecosystems of South East Queensland. These soft-bodied invertebrates are not merely forest-floor dwellers; they are essential agents in nutrient cycling, soil formation, and food web dynamics.

Slugs and snails act as natural decomposers, breaking down dead plant material, fungi, and organic detritus, thus enriching the soil with nutrients. This process supports healthy microbial communities and promotes seedling establishment. Some species, particularly native snails, also feed on fungi, helping to disperse mycorrhizal spores that underpin forest health through symbiotic relationships with trees.

Beyond their role in decomposition, they serve as a crucial food source for native birds, frogs, lizards, and small mammals. Their high calcium content makes them especially valuable for species requiring dietary calcium for egg production and skeletal health.

Despite their importance, many native slug and snail populations in South East Queensland are experiencing rapid decline. Habitat loss from urban expansion and agricultural development has fragmented rainforest corridors and reduced the moist, shaded microhabitats these creatures depend on. This is particularly true for regions like the Sunshine Coast hinterland, the Glass House Mountains, and remnant rainforests around Gympie.

Introduced species also pose a significant threat. Predatory flatworms, rats, and some birds prey on native molluscs, while invasive snail species outcompete them for food and shelter. Moreover, widespread herbicide and pesticide use in agricultural settings indirectly harms molluscs through soil contamination and loss of fungal food sources.

Climate change adds further pressure. Rising temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns reduce the periods of moisture that slugs and snails require to remain active and reproduce. Prolonged dry spells, now more common in SEQ, often lead to local die-offs of vulnerable populations.

The loss of native slugs and snails represents more than just a reduction in species diversity. It signals a breakdown in fundamental ecological processes. Conservation strategies must begin to include molluscs as key indicators of ecosystem health. Preserving damp, shaded habitats; reducing chemical inputs; and conducting dedicated surveys of gastropod populations are vital steps in reversing their decline.

Ultimately, recognising the role of these humble organisms can shift conservation from a focus solely on the visible and iconic, to an inclusive understanding of all life that sustains the bush—from canopy to soil.

MEET ROBYN

In February this year we had the lovely Robyn Wyllie start working with us in the office.

We thought you may like to get to know her also, so we sat down with her and asked her a few questions.

1. **Tell us a little about yourself.**

   I am a born and bred Gympie girl and my family have lived in the Gympie region for at least five generations. I have grown up helping on my parent's farm where over the years we grew pawpaw's, mangoes, bananas, custard apples and multiple varieties of small crops as well as raising beef cattle. We now primarily focus on our Bazadais cattle herd but in the last 10-15 years we have also introduced donkeys to the farm.

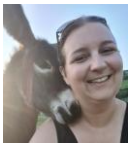
2. **Tell us a little bit about your role at Gympie & District Landcare.**

   After working in public accounting firms for 20 years, it was time for a change of pace. I now utilise my accounting and bookkeeping skills by processing the day-to-day business accounts and payroll as well as updating and streamlining the systems around these.

3. **What's your favourite part about working with Gympie & District Landcare?**

   There are a lot of new things happening at Gympie Landcare right now and it is exciting and challenging to be part of the conversations developing the strategies for guiding Gympie Landcare in the direction we want the organisation to go in the future to make it even better than ever.

4. **Tell us something interesting or unexpected about yourself outside of Landcare. What makes you unique?**

   Something interesting about me is that my family owns donkeys. And not just a couple but over 40 of them! Each donkey has a name and its own unique personality. Most of them love interacting with people so it's very easy to fall in love with them.

5. **What other interests or hobbies do you enjoy?**

   I enjoy travelling and have now been to 22 countries including Egypt, South Africa, Canada and Greece.

   In 2024, I was very blessed to be able to travel overseas three times (NZ, Bali and Europe) and interstate twice (Melbourne and Tassie) visiting so many incredible places along the way. There are way too many highlights to choose just one but I was pretty excited when I was able to watch the new Gladiator 2 movie in a cinema in Rome after having walked through the Colosseum and the ruins of the port city of Ostia (both featured in the film) just a few days before.

   There's nothing quite like being immersed in another country and culture to make you appreciate just how great we have it back home in little old Gympie Australia.

6. **What's your vision for the future of Gympie & District Landcare and the local community?**

   Probably getting more awareness out into the community about what we are and what we do.

   Gympie Landcare is more than just where you can collect your free rates trees. Our nursery is open four days a week for anyone to visit selling native plants; and our Environment & Conservation crews are out and about in the region rehabilitating, maintaining and creating spaces to benefit our environment and wildlife. And they all do it with a smile on their face and a genuine heart for nature and our community.

Spot It Stop It

KEEP TILAPIA IN CHECK

Introduced **tilapia are a major threat** to Australia's native biodiversity, potentially affecting local fish species and subsequently impacting regional fishing activities.

SPOT it

Spotted Tilapia
up to 30cm long

Juvenile

Adult

Note the lack of gaps on dorsal fin on both Spotted & Mozambique species

Mozambique Tilapia
up to 40cm long

Juvenile

Male

Female

STOP it

If caught, tilapia **must be** humanely euthanised, and disposed of as soon as practicable.

Bury away from waterway

Or place in rubbish bin

Learn more