



2 April 2019

## **Our Blockies' Course – Where We're Going Next!**

### **Field Trip to Mel & Estelle Hobbins Property**

1869 Noosa Road, Traveston.

A 30-acre property, that was part of a 200 acre Grazing and Fruit Farm which was sub-divided some 30 years ago and overlooks Woondum National Park and is in the upper catchment of Dingo Creek, part of the Six Mile/Mary River system. We moved to the property 13 years ago, Mel direct from UK.

The bulk of the property is given over to grazing for Estelle's horses. The Orchard and Veggie areas occupy about 4 acres and the hardwood plantation and rainforest plantings a further 6 acres.

A wide range of cool season and tropical veggies are grown in both traditional beds and food forest type plantings.

Entering the transition to the "Cool Season" you will see planting areas that have recently had Green Manure incorporated. The exceptionally high temperatures that continue, (Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> 37c) will delay actual planting, this year.

Summer crops still abound with many tropical leafy greens, developing Ginger, Yacon and Jerusalem Artichoke. A collection 16 x Climbing and 3 x Bush Snake Beans should still be in production and The Winged Beans should be making an appearance.

The wide variety of fruit and nut trees now number well over 120 and include citrus that Mel budded at a grafting workshop in 2016.

The huge amount of mulch required is produced on site comprising hay collected from paddocks or from the extensive plantings of East Indian Lemongrass, grown specifically for the purpose. Composting and general soil improvement are an ongoing activity on the property.

Then there are the trees, Mel loves his trees. More or less starting from scratch, well dead and dying Wattles, Lantana and Tobacco Bush, actually, a developing plantation of Gympie Messmate and Spotted Gum, (Oldest 10 years) and Reveg plantings along and out from creeks and Dams. Mel is an avid seed collector and now grows many species himself as well as donating to Noosa and Gympie Landcare.

We are fortunate to live in an amazing part of the World, a diversity of Flora and Fauna that is second to none. Although we face immense challenges from changing climate, pests and diseases, Mother Nature has the ability respond, given just a little help and respect. Although hard work life on a Rural Property can be both rewarding and an adventure!

I look forward to sharing my little piece of paradise with you if even for a short time.

Melvyn Hobbins | Property Owner



## Containers for Change

As a state, we're great at many things. However, when it comes to recycling, Queensland can do a lot better. In fact, we have one of the lowest recycling rates in Australia, at around 44%.

Each year, approximately three billion beverage containers are generated in our state alone and are the second most littered item.

So, to help us all improve our recycling efforts and keep our beautiful environment litter-free, Gympie Landcare have registered for the Containers for Change scheme.

Now when you drop off your recycling containers to a drop off point, you can elect Gympie Landcare as the beneficiary of your refund amount! Not only are you helping the environment, you're now donating to Gympie Landcare and helping us continue to do what we do best.

All you need to do is provide our code: C10161523

For more information, please visit [www.containersforchange.com.au](http://www.containersforchange.com.au)



## Volunteer Position – Education & Events Coordinator

We are looking for an enthusiastic person who is studying Event Planning or Project Management to produce events from conception through to completion. The Education & Event Coordinator should have a passion and desire to learn about event management and project management with a willingness to learn. The successful candidate will ideally be studying event or project management, be reliable, passionate, and an enthusiastic self-starter who is willing to work with our organisation to gain experience in relation to their studies.



To read more about the role description, please visit our website.

To apply, please forward a cover letter outlining your studies and why this position is a perfect fit for you, together with your resume with three references to [admin@gympielandcare.org.au](mailto:admin@gympielandcare.org.au).

## Volunteering at Gympie Landcare

Thinking about volunteering with us? Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation bringing lots of different and much-needed skill, experience, and knowledge to our organisation. To assist with managing incoming volunteers, we are now holding volunteer induction days on the first Friday of every month from 9.00am. Volunteers are able to attend the induction in the morning, have some lunch with our current volunteers (please bring your own) and then continue to volunteer some hours in the afternoon. Alternatively, you can come for the induction to just to see if it is right for you and we can work with you to arrange which days you would like to volunteer.

When people think of volunteering with us, most people assume the only area they can volunteer in is our nursery, but that's not true! We have many areas and departments that require volunteers, from administration, marketing and education to bio-control and events. Whatever your background is, we're sure we can fit you into an area that works for both of us.

If you intend on attending one of our volunteer induction days, please RSVP by the Wednesday before (the first week of each month) to ensure we are prepared for your arrival.

To enable us to find the right area for you to volunteer in please visit our website and complete a registration form or pop into our office.



## Permaculture Principle 2 – Catch & Store Energy



Permaculture defines energy in its broadest context. So not only do we see energy as wind, sun, and water but we see soil, plants and human effort as energy as well. What is important on your piece of land is that you identify all the possible opportunities to store or preserve energy. Once you have a list of those opportunities research possible techniques for capturing that energy. Sun can be captured through solar panels into batteries and of course the use of solar ovens. But Sun is also captured through plants. Plants use sunlight and turn it into chemical energy that feeds insects, animals, and humans. So, plant as many trees, flowers, and edible plants as you can as you are storing energy for later use. Water is another source of energy. Water can be captured in dams, tanks and most importantly soil. Healthy soil stores a significant amount of water which plants can use to grow strong and healthy. The aim with water is to keep it on your property for as long as you can so this might mean creating swales or doing deep ripping in the paddocks so that water can seep in and nourish the earth.



Human effort is another form of energy, so a good Permaculture design will store the maximum amount of energy with the least amount of effort. Getting some mates over to help you on your block is a way of moving activities forward by using human energy. What would have taken weeks can now be done in a few hours. This highlights the importance of a community where we can harness and share human energy supporting each other to thrive. What comes with a tight-knit community is also a lot of other benefits such as friendship, caring, support, etc.



Other forms of storing or saving energy are preserving excess produce in the form of pickles, jams, etc.,

biogas, working dogs, your woodpile on the farm, a composting toilet that does not use water is a form of preserving energy and even redirecting grey water onto your orchard. On a personal level surrounding yourself with people who energise you and don't drain your energy is also a way of ensuring energy preservation and good health.

Energy in all its forms is what sustains life, it needs to be preserved at all cost.

Mel Marx | Management Committee Member

## **Fundraising for Gympie Landcare – Drakes Key Tags**

Did you know that when you shop at Drakes in the old "IGA complex" and show them one of our Gympie & District Landcare Group key tags, 1% of your total bill is donated towards our organisation?

By using your tag every time you shop, you're actually fundraising for our organisation!

If you do not have a Drakes key tag currently, please contact our office on (07)5483 8866 or email [admin-assistant@gympielandcare.org.au](mailto:admin-assistant@gympielandcare.org.au) and we will provide one for you to pick up from our office.



## **Find Us on Facebook!**

Here at Gympie & District Landcare Group Incorporated, we recognise that social media is becoming one of the most effective sources of communication and a fantastic way to get our name out there and increase our exposure! Not only is it a means for communication, but it creates an additional platform to keep our community aware of upcoming events and provides further opportunity to provide the community with helpful tips in relation to land care.

We would love to see our Facebook follower base increase and encourage all of our members to "follow us" on Facebook.

If you have a Facebook account, go to our Facebook page and hit the "like" button to follow our posts.

Don't forget to like and share our posts on our page to assist us in gaining further exposure in our local area!



## **News from the Nursery**

In the space of two weeks, the nursery has gone from a state of concern for being out-of-water and out-of-space to hold ageing tubestock into winter for delayed planting projects... to a state of concern for soon-being-out-of-stock as those field planting projects jump back into high gear before the start of winter. Such is the nature of revegetation.

It has been a good summer of production in the nursery. A steady supply of seed from public, staff, volunteers and members has kept our seed-processing bench an unruly collage. This in turn has kept the propagation tunnel well stocked with enough greenery for me to suggest double-shifts at the potting bench... but it turns out I don't supply enough ice-creams for double-shift-work.

Collectively, we have been aiming to replenish the nursery with several of the staple species. Which is not as straightforward as it may seem. Talk to the field crew and there's a staple list of a dozen or more species for riparian restoration. There's another almost separate dozen for dry

eucalypt/koala revegetation. A third list for mixed forest/rainforest. Then I chat to others more familiar with urban or landscape demand – another couple-dozen species. And then looking further afield, the dry vine-forest species that in the past have gained the nursery a good name...

It makes me think of a phrase I first heard in the political sphere – “try to please everybody and you’ll end up pleasing nobody”.

At the end of the week, or month, the nursery seems to end up muddling through and perhaps pleasing the majority somewhat serendipitously. Someone mentions a species we should have more of and the next week, another person arrives with some seed. Certain species were not being produced fast enough or in sufficient volume for particular projects, but then seasonal delays gave more time for additional stock to be hardened, or a changed assessment of site conditions allowed additional in-stock species to fit the bill.



Muddling is not the ideal production method of course. There’s room for improvement, but with so many plant species in the equation and a variable number of hands around the nursery on any given day it seems it will retain its presence. Perhaps if we simply reclassify it as ‘stochasticity’ it will seem far more intentional, intellectual and ecologically sensible.

In case you’re perturbed by the thought of disorderliness and unpredictability reigning supreme in the nursery, I’ll have you know that some goings-on at the nursery are bringing with them a semblance of

professionalism. For several months now, propagation of *Grevillea* cultivars for groundcovers has been a thorn in our side – somewhere along the way a fairly successful method of propagating from cuttings went awry. So, we’re stepping back through the variables, even to the extent of running comparative trials and taking notes. Watch this space for the multivariate statistical analyses... well, after I explain to the volunteers what ‘multivariate’ means... it is a bit of a scary word, after all...

Water consumption has always been an issue in nursery production and this nursery is no exception. The prolonged hot dry summer saw the nursery dam reaching empty once again, and plans were in place (again) to expand it. Then it rained! Such a blessing doesn’t take away from the fact that our irrigation layout has many variables to address in regard to water efficiency. Edges, droplet size and distribution, the moisture retention of the potting media and ideal irrigation timing are the few key aspects at present. Look up a Best Practice manual and there’s plenty of information on how to assess and address irrigation efficiencies. Some of the solutions come with considerable price tags, others are simply not an option in an already established facility. Thankfully a lot of the groundwork was done at construction for enabling good water usage, so now it is mainly a case of refining what is in place rather than re-inventing a wheel.

The increased demand for production over summer highlighted a few weak points in the production chain. Some of those, such as potting techniques, have been relatively easy to implement improvements; educating volunteers on best practice techniques for seedling prickout, potting, root-and-shoot grading and record keeping. The education is ongoing of course – we all know how hard it is to break old habits! But the new information has been well received, and to their credit, the volunteers have even tolerated me introducing them to different techniques that didn’t end up being as successful as I boasted they should be!

Potting productivity is not just about the people. The physical space, the location of inputs, the flow of the processes all play a part. I am sure, that if I were to provide enough beer and ice-cream at

the end of the day, I could double the potting rate (whilst still upholding stock quality). But we'd need room to place those extra plants. Reconfiguring existing infrastructure is no small decision to make. Especially at the time of year when said infrastructure is full-up with seedlings and tubestock. Some of our infrastructure is being upgraded out of necessity – there is only so many times a rusty bench can be given a new lease on life – but even that brings its own interruptions to stock production.

Improvement in the nursery is not just about productivity. Record keeping is a very important part of the nursery operations, especially when dealing with a few hundred different species in plants and seeds, some of which are very specific in their natural distributions. Some of our stock includes species that are not local natives and are intended only for landscaping purposes. So having our plants identified correctly from seed source right through to the sales counter is important for the customer and the environment. Stock identification is an ongoing job – there are always new species to learn about as well as keeping the existing stock correctly labelled. Perhaps one day some of this quality control will be aided by computer-based record keeping, but for the time being it falls to us humans to steadily and collectively improve our identification and labelling skills and methods.

As I finish typing this article, a cool SW wind pushes the summer heat away. Autumn has arrived it seems. The effect on nursery production, like every year, will be noticed all the way to December now. The height of the growing year is over. Cool nights and shorter days will drop the propagation rates significantly. Many species will not germinate effectively over winter months; seed may remain dormant until spring arrives or even rot in the cooler, wetter seedling trays. It will be a time to turn focus to other tasks about the nursery. But this autumn is set to see most of our current stock leaving the nursery for field projects on a scale that Gympie Landcare has not experienced for many years – so we cannot turn all our attention away from propagation, even if nature recommends it!

Shane Litherland | Nursery Manager

## **Nursery Manager's Plant of the Month – Native Primrose, *Ludwigia Octovalvis***

Here is a plant I wouldn't have dreamed of promoting even two weeks ago in the heat and dry. A wetland plant!

Any of you with a dam, frogpond or even aquarium, may be familiar with an introduced primrose that can sprawl across the surface of the water and grow up from the shallows, with a 5-petaled yellow flower about the size of a 20-cent coin. This immigrant is known as Water Primrose, *Ludwigia peploides* and may even be considered problematic in some places.

The Native Primrose *Ludwigia octovalvis* prefers wet-land rather than being an immersed waterplant. It is a fast grower that forms a rounded shrub typically 1-2m high at maturity. In natural settings it develops quite a spindly look as it booms in growth during the wetter times then defoliates and even senesces at the extremities in dry spells. Come the next wet phase though and it will regenerate from its woody base or trunk. It has yellow flowers but only four petals, not 5 like its exotic relative.

The growth habit of *L. octovalvis* makes it suitable for a range of applications in wet or waterlogged soils. Its fast growth and matted roots will help stabilise the soil surface and act as a good water 'pump' to transpire moisture from the soil into the air. It will perform well to 'capture' a site in locations that may typically be planted with slower growing plants



like *Lomandra longifolia* or *Waterhousea floribunda* and could even work effectively as a 'companion' to such slower species, assisting in the displacement of more aggressive exotic grasses.



Individual plants of *L. octovalvis* may only live a few years, but they are quite capable of self-seeding and maintaining a viable population once established. I have seen them form a rich stand interspersed with other sedges and rushes in a soak/overflow below a dam, creating a great sediment trap and wetland habitat. Of course, once taller plants become established and shade an area, *L. octovalvis* will gradually die out.

In more landscaped settings, the vigorous growth of *L. octovalvis* can be harnessed through regular tip-pruning to maintain a bushy growth form, perhaps with seasonal pruning of woody stems to keep it to a preferred size. As long as good soil moisture is maintained *L. octovalvis* can provide extended cycles of flowering through most of the year.

The Latin species name *octovalvis* refers to the eight valves or segments in the seed pod which is a slender capsule about 5 cm long that dries to a dark-brown colour and then splits open to reveal many tiny seeds. The species has a pan-tropical distribution and perhaps traditional medicinal uses in various parts of the world.

Shane Litherland | Nursery Manager

## Seeds Propagation – And So Ends the Journey of the Seed

At long last! After three drawn-out months of scrambling through undergrowth and dangling from tree-tops (seed collection), of gastrointestinal anguish and carpal-tunnel syndrome (seed processing), and of complete and utter phonetic confusion (having to learn Latin just to understand the identification books), the moment of glory has arrived – chucking that damn seed at a pile of dirt and letting it grow!

Well... if only it were that easy. Perhaps it is; nature has been using that method quite successfully since the dawn of plants. The catch for us is, we are now wanting to chuck *our* specially chosen seed at a bit of dirt and hope that it grows in preference to whatever nature put there before we had this crazy idea.

Enter the nursery industry.

Try and grow your preferred plant in any old patch of dirt? You'll probably get a harvest of 'weed' seedlings before you find 'your' plant. Enter highly-refined, highly-transported potting media. Nearly-sterile to the point of needing inoculation for the healthy growth of some plants that rely on symbiotic soil microbes (many Nitrogen-fixing plants for example), but at least you can be confident that the green shoots that emerge are from 'your' seeds.

Try and grow your seed in any patch of dirt, in any old location? Even if you escaped the weeds, how well do you know your soil, what is its composition? Enter more highly-refined, high-energy-consumption additives for your potting media, to adjust porosity and water-holding capacity or to provide a regulated supply of certain key nutrients. Then how do you keep your seeds at just the right moisture content for ideal germination without drying out or drowning? Or stop them from being eaten? Enter the magnificence of the petrochemical industry, with its poly-pipe, its shade cloth, its propagation tunnels and misthouses, its engineered sprinklers... all still relying on

the mining and manufacturing sectors to provide electricity, metals and semiconductors to the fancy irrigation controllers, solenoids and pumps...

All seems rather daunting, and not-very-landcaring-at-all, yes? Well, 'daunting' is probably why a lot of people in these modern times have supported the boom of industrial plant propagation – we're too busy or under-resourced to tackle nature head-on and get the quick-fix we desire. So we trot off to our nearest plant supplier and take something green home in a shell of petrochemical plastic, hiding our ignorance or denial behind a fresh bit of vegetation in our front hedge or back-paddock gully.

But it doesn't all have to be that hard.

Nature has solutions for us; the first step in finding them is un-learning what I call the 'control paradigm' of our culture and times. That's a digression for another story though, so for now, I'll skip straight to what some of those solutions are.

- Compost
- Leaf litter
- Sunlight
- Gravity
- Erosion
- Rain
- Vegetation

Compost is nature's all-purpose germination, potting and fertilising media. Done well, it can make backyard propagation enjoyable and easy. Done very well, it can even be too good for a lot of native plants. Almost like death by chocolate. Or wine.

Leaf litter (usually the older, decomposing layers) is nature's inoculant, bringing the 'life' into any soil. It is where almost all plants germinate, before their roots venture deeper into the ground. It can also help moderate the density and nutrient-richness of compost in a potting media.

Sunlight is a wonderful source of warmth and sterilising radiation, which when applied to the above items can get you just the right results for a clean germinating media.

Gravity (plus a sieve) is a great tool for helping sort out your ingredients (as well as your seeds) to get the ideal size of media to suit your chosen seed.

Erosion is nature's sieve – with rain and gravity, it can create a palette of shapes, sizes and textures for you to play with. Be it washed leaf-litter, sands or silts, it can provide you with additives for your media or help in removing some materials from your mix.

Rain of course needs no explanation. It does however need some patience on our part. When coupled with gravity, it is what makes your watering-can work. Or your leaky weir. Or, if you just can't resist a good bit of poly pipe and a sprinkler from a header dam (or your local urban water-tower), then you can thank gravity again.

Vegetation is nature's weed-fence, shade house and humidifier all-in-one. Just pick the right vegetation: under a mango tree might be great for seedlings... except in January as the fruits plummet earthwards.

None of that is new knowledge of course. It is the building blocks of the industrial-scaled alternatives mentioned earlier. Sometimes though, us humans would do well to be reminded that behind all our supposed intelligence and inventiveness, we exist as mortal, biological beings dependent upon a world of other biological beings.

Now how does all this come back to the topic of seed propagation? Well, it is about renewing your powers of observation and acceptance. Observing how nature grows seeds. Accepting that the easiest way to grow our own seed is to follow nature's lead.

If propagating plants from seed is new to you, then by all means start with the tried-and-tested basics, even if that includes bagged seed-raising mix, fertilisers, containers and packaged garden-variety seed from a local retailer. Learn what does work and why it works, so you can then understand what 'rules' you can later bend.

As you venture into propagating native seeds, hone those observation skills. When you collected the seed, what time of year was it? What sort of soil was the parent plant growing in? Were there any seedlings nearby and if so, what sort of conditions appeared to favour their germination and growth? How did you go with previous propagating trials?

Such questions, study and observations of my own have given me a few 'baselines' to work from in propagation, such as:

- *Eucalyptus* are reasonably fine seed; they germinate quite well sown on the surface of soil or with a very light covering. It can be hard to see the difference between viable seed and 'frass' so viability may not be known until after a batch is sown and germinates. Species from the drier forest types can germinate better with a warm soak before sowing. Winter is often woeful for germination.
- *Acacia* do best with a warm-hot soak before sowing. Given most Acacias are a dry-forest type, they won't fare so well in heavy/wet propagation media.
- *Casuarina* don't need treatment; the dry-forest species may germinate better after a warm soak, but they have an intriguing characteristic of clumping together like a wet cotton-ball after they get wet, so it isn't worth the hassle of soaking them.
- *Melaleuca* are typically a wetland plant, at least for establishment, so keep the germination media constantly moist. Some species may take several weeks to germinate. Very fine seed – sprinkle on surface or with very light covering.
- Small fruity seeds (*Streblus*, *Aphananthe*, *Guioa*, etc) don't have a great shelf-life, so process the fruits and sow the seeds promptly. Soaking can help pick out the good seed (usually it sinks) from the bad (usually it floats) but it is rare to get a big enough collection of seed to bother with this step.

...And so forth. Again, there are plenty of resources out there on species-specific propagation techniques. Far more than would fit in one newsletter article.

The last aspect I will leave you with, is how to sow the seed. Do you use community trays or boxes where you sprinkle seed across the full area of the container, then pot the seedlings up individually? Do you sow directly into pots with just one seed or a pinch of seeds per pot? Do you allocate a corner of your garden to bury those species that sometimes germinate over several years? Do you pre-treat the seed (e.g. hot soak), roll it up in a ball of soil/clay and throw it at a bare riverbank or road cutting? Do you sow it directly in the field where it is to live, after ripping and spraying strips? Each of these options has its pros and cons. Community trays are a good way to get a lot of seedlings from a small germination space, but then the seedlings have their roots disturbed by potting-on and shallow trays can dry out much easier than pots. Sowing in pots lets roots develop naturally but only works well for seed with a known viability. Garden-bed sites can be a 'set-and-forget' option but might get oversown with several species and seedlots, testing your identification skills in years to come. Distributing seed into the field may be quicker than planting but typically requires far more seed to get the desired final numbers of plants surviving. Each of these aspects will also vary for your individual circumstances and local conditions. In our high-rainfall coastal areas, the growth rates of pasture grasses and legumes is one deterrent to direct seeding in the field, for example. But direct-seeding a steep eroding creek-bank at the tail-end of summer/autumn rains might cause less disturbance than planting tubestock, even if the

result takes more seeds at the start and a few more years to see the visual difference. On the other hand, certain species that would have historically grown in a particular location may only be reintroduced in our lifetime by planting tubestock or even advanced potted plants. There are, perhaps, as many ways to propagate a native plant as there are feral cats to skin! But don't let that stop you trying native plant propagation (or feral cat reduction either, for that matter).

The Australian Native Plants Society has more information on the practical steps involved in seed germination. To go to their website, please visit [anpsa.org.au/seed.html](http://anpsa.org.au/seed.html)

Shane Litherland | Nursery Manager

## **Insect Population on the Decline**



You may have read in the news recently, insect populations around the world are on the decline. But why is this happening?

Significant factors include loss of habitat, pesticides, fertilisers, pollution and climate change.

Insects play an important role in our ecosystems and are food for frogs, fish, birds and other animals. If we don't have insects, we lose our insect eating animals. A lot more research needs to be done and while insect losses were reported some species were increasing.

You can help by planting natives and include annuals that flower year-round, built insect hotels and make deadwood piles at the bottom of your garden for beetles, eliminate pesticides and encourage beneficial insects into your garden.

## **What's New in Bio-Control**

Shane has been busy setting up our shared office while Lavina has provided us with a computer and internet access which has proven to be an invaluable tool.

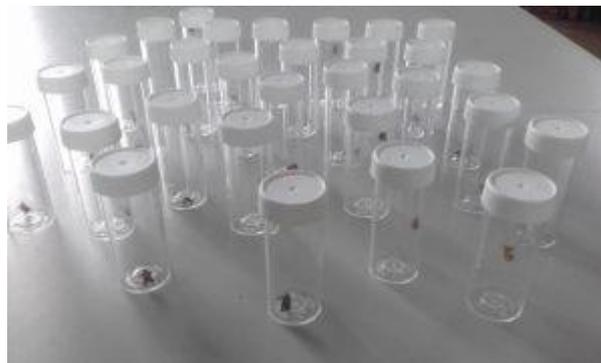
Eighteen months into our Leaf tying moth project we began our first field releases. Over 700 moths have been relocated to two sites in Gympie and more are to be released over the next few weeks. Once we know the moths can establish in the field, we can look at releasing to landholders. Our moth pics were taken by biocontrol's volunteer Kerrie Odonnell.



Our jewel beetles are in full production with thousands being released since January and while we have reduced our tingid production, the tiny bugs are still going out into the field as usual.

If you would like to release insects onto your property to control cats claw creeper or madeira vine, Gympie Regional Council heavily subsidises the cost by 75 percent for releases in the Gympie Region. Please contact Landcare to place your order.

Yvonne Hennell | Bio-Control Manager



## What's New in CLS – Drought

This will be the first of a short series of reports that detail how CLS aims to deliver projects with best practice methods. I hope this series will help our members with some hints to assist them in getting the best results with your own revegetation or gardening efforts on your own blocks. I will be covering dealing with drought, in this first instalment and will cover other helpful topics such as; organic revegetation, weed management, species selection, maintenance, in later instalments.

Let's get down to business! Drought is not an easy time for revegetation work. It can disrupt the flow of a project, and if you plan your project poorly you could end up wasting a lot of time and money.



Good project plans will have a plan A and plan B which can deal with a drought. In the planning phase of your project you need to consider what the site conditions will be like in good rainfall like a La Nina year and what you will do in an El Nino. CLS will concentrate our planting around rainfall events to take advantage of soil moisture and maximise survival of our tubestock. I think a lot of you at home regularly water your trees after planting them which is fine and often gets a good result in the end, but now consider a project with 1000 trees or even 10000. How do we water them? Well we usually don't... and still get successful project outcomes. How do we do it? Read on.

Planting schedules have to be flexible. In Cooloola Shire the wet season is summer followed by a dry season in winter, but you can get spring and autumn storms as well. Plan to get your site prepared before the rains come so that it is ready to go when the rain arrives. Then watch the weather and wait. It is far cheaper to water 1000 trees in pots than 1000 trees planted across 1Ha of paddock. Slow growth of your tube stock down while holding them by withholding fertiliser and placing them under shade for longer. When the soil on site is moist plant, we often do all our planting in 3-4 days followed by a break until the next rain. A rain event such as 150mm is required to recharge the soil moisture after a long dry period so don't be fooled by 6 – 10mm and race out planting at the first sign of showers.

Often autumn rains can be the best time to plant as the soil stays moist for longer. Temperatures are dropping causing evaporation and transpiration decrease, and this is helped by foggy dewy mornings. Weed growth is also better at this time and you'll need to stay on top of the annual weeds.

Summer rains can be okay but often summer storms are followed by weeks of long hot days, and the soil can dry out too quickly.

Planting methods will have a lot to do with survival. All tubestock are soaked in tubs before planting. Soaking the roots for 5mins prior to planting makes the biggest difference. In wet soils you may be able to dry (without any watering) plant the trees as the soil will stay wet for a few weeks. In moist soils we use aqua spears. We plant with aqua spears exclusively once the soil moisture is less than ideal. Aqua spear planting allows you to dig the hole and break up soil clods whilst adding 2-6 litres to the hole and surrounding soil at the same time. Good compaction of the surface soil on the planting hole is essential to lock in the moisture. If there is any on site mulch drag it in over the root zone to help repel weeds from the moist soil. Aqua spear planted trees do not need watering for about six weeks but if backup rainfall occurs, they will not need watering ever.



Maintenance is reduced during a drought as spray work usually holds until further rainfall. It can be a good time to catch up on maintenance get set for the next growth season. If you have a lot of onsite dry grasses these can be cut and used to mulch around the trees. A quick spray around the trees and mulch over the top will last for months. This will help with retaining moisture and cool the soil in the root zone. Slashed grasses make great mulch, or lawn clippings from a mower catcher. On the other hand, they can create a dry water proof layer if placed too thick around plantings.

Watering when needed – Do not leave it too late to water, once tubestock have died back due to drought they usually do not recover, and you could waste a lot of time watering a sick dying plant that never recovers. The best option is to be ruthless and not water, and if there is 10% losses replace them once more when rain occurs. This way only the strongest stock and species survive. If you have done your homework on species selection, drought should not be a problem to the overall success, but it will slow down growth. Dry rainforest species should be avoided in drought as they have sensitive roots which do not recover well. Water the plantings closest to established trees first as the soil dries out quicker in these areas despite being shaded. The soil stays moist far longer out in the paddocks than under trees. Do not water plants that have reached 1m tall as they are already established, and continued watering will only encourage a poor root system and trees than blow over. Avoid all unnecessary watering and you will get stronger better trees with well-developed root systems.

Herbicides – we avoid most foliar herbicide use once weeds are wilting or in drought stress. Treatment in these conditions often leads to herbicide resistance. Cut stump and physical control can continue for much longer so we favour these methods. Glyphosate can continue to be used for some time into dry weather, but the kill will be slower and will fail on woodier weeds. Kamba should never be used around trees in dry conditions as you may kill them. Use additional surfactant and maximum rates and coverage during dry weather. For cut stump application Apparent Slogger will continue to be effective into dry weather but glyphosate is useless in dry weather. Mulching is an excellent alternative to spray maintenance in dry weather.

I hope this helps and encourages you to try some of these methods. Now we have finally had some rain it is a great time to get out planting in the Gympie region.

Carl Scheffe | CLS Manager

## Expression of Interest – CLS Team Member

We are seeking expressions of interest from enthusiastic, career-minded people to join our Contract Landcare Services (CLS) team.

### Our Organisation

Gympie and District Landcare Group is a community-based organisation active in the Gympie.

Region, Queensland. The Group is an incorporated organisation and a registered charity. Members elect an Executive (Management Committee) each year that is responsible for management oversight. Members and volunteers are integrally involved in the group's main activities: operating a local native plant nursery; raising biocontrol insects for invasive plant species control; providing land care services, fostering local land caring activities; and community education.



### Purpose of Position

To provide the best environmental outcomes for our clients through a range of specialist landcare services.

### Person

This person will be able to implement project objectives as directed. Work well with others in a team environment. Have a passion for land caring activities as it pertains to revegetation, clearing and caring for the environment. This person will have initiative and be open to sharing their practical skills and experiences with a broad range of people and be committed to working safely.

To read the full job description, please visit our website.

Expressions of Interest are to include a cover letter and resume with three references and are to be emailed to [admin@gympielandcare.org.au](mailto:admin@gympielandcare.org.au). Expressions of Interest that do not meet this requirement will not be considered.

## Our Recent Guests All the Way from Singapore!



The Singaporean BeeTreesome came to visit Gympie Landcare on 13 March 2019!

The BeeTreesome are from the National Parks Boards of Singapore and their goal for the study trip was to gain a deeper understanding of the practical and social aspects of stingless beekeeping, as well as on other native bee habitat enhancements such as bee hotels and clay blocks for *Amegilla*. Not only that, they hoped to find some inspiration on public education for the solitary of bees, which apparently is something they hope to start in Singapore.

The BeeTreesome had a lovely afternoon here at Landcare with an afternoon tea, although they did comment that with the heat, they could not figure out which was the hold and which was the cold tap – Welcome to Australia, BeeTreesome!

## Our Trip to the Biosphere Conference

As the first ever Australian Biosphere Conference was held in Maryborough, Gympie Landcare decided to send a representative and I was the privileged person to be chosen. What a fantastic conference it was!

First, I would like to explain what the term “biosphere” means. To make sure I got it right, I looked up Mr. Google and I think this explanation does it justice:

A **biosphere** is the global ecological system integrating all living beings and their relationships, including their interaction with the elements of the lithosphere (crust and upper mantle of the earth), geosphere (underneath the soil), hydrosphere (oceans, rivers, lakes, etc) and atmosphere (air).

The theme of conference was: We are all connected.

Our excellent MC's were Meriem Bouamrane from UNESCO and Costa Georgiadis from Gardening Australia. Many guest speakers made it soon clear that working together is the only way how we can save our planet.

We heard from professors, indigenous locals, government employees, business people, graziers as well as school children what they contribute to make the Great Sandy Biosphere a place which people are proud to call their home.

The Great Sandy Biosphere covers an area of 496,194 hectares from Bundaberg to Gympie (did you know you lived in a biosphere? One of only nine in Australia) and includes Fraser Island as well as a large area of ocean. It is used for a wide range of urban, industry and agriculture purposes, education services, tourism, sport and recreation and infrastructure as well as forest reserves, national conservation and marine parks.

What struck me most was the emphasis on integrating people, businesses, government and schools, not setting it apart like national parks or world heritage areas. In a biosphere, businesses are encouraged to find ecological solutions to problems, schools are teaching their students how to minimise environmental negative impact, governments work with businesses to support innovative, environmentally sound practices and all people are part of this.

Dale Hollis, the General Manager of Bundaberg Canegrowers Pty Ltd, explained how they were able to install solar powered irrigation with the help of the Bundaberg Council. David de Paoli had an interesting powerpoint on how he changed his father's cane farm into a vegetable growing business and uses environmentally safe practises to be on top of his game. I was very impressed by the way sensors measure the soil moisture and adjust irrigation so there is no run-off into the ocean. Natural run-offs during storms are handled with especially planted vegetation to absorb and or filter excess water.

James Schultz is a young CEO and co-founder of GreenCollar. He is technically savvy and helps businesses come up with innovative solutions that lead to positive environmental, economic and social outcomes.

Nadia Campbell from Goodicum Pastoral Co talked about their approach to cattle grazing which not only improved their pasture, their native species (both fauna and flora) but also their return on investment due to less animal stress and less monetary input. She also described how much more satisfying it was “to do the right thing”. She showed photos of how they muster their cattle with horses and very quiet dogs only. I highly suggest you have a look at their website [goondicumpastoralco.com.au](http://goondicumpastoralco.com.au)

Costa Georgiadis was a little human torpedo and kept us well and truly on the edge of our seats. He – and everyone else at the conference – was extremely impressed by the schools which did several presentations of their projects.

From war on waste, where students of each class go around every day towards the end of their breaks and collect all food scraps to be composted, to growing vegetables, herbs and fruit on school grounds, they were coming up with more and more amazing projects. Families are supplied with compost buckets and the children bring the food scraps to school for their compost. Students now go to other schools to teach others what they have learnt. They are making beeswax food wraps and encourage students to use these instead of glad wrap. They say no to plastic bags and sew canvas bags which they decorate with environmental slogans and sell for some of their environmental programs. They encourage each other not to bring items in their lunchbox which are prepacked and/or wrapped in plastic or alfoil. These children blew you away with how well they knew their topics and how well they spoke (better than some of the presenters I might add).

As I am also a member of the Gympie Community Garden, I really hope that Gympie & District Landcare and Gympie Community Garden together with the local schools will come up with some amazing projects – as the biosphere conference was titled: We are all connected! I would like to end my report with the three main laws of the local Butchulla people:

- What is good for the land must come first
- Do not take what is not yours
- If you have plenty, you must share

Thanks again, Gympie Landcare for giving me the opportunity to attend this amazing conference. I really hope that many people got inspired and will carry the seeds into the wider community. I will do my best to be one of them!

Regula Waser | Financial Officer

## Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General meeting will be held at 10.00am, Saturday 13 April 2019.

If you would like to add any items to the agenda in addition to the usual business of the meeting, please email [admin@gympielandcare.org.au](mailto:admin@gympielandcare.org.au) by the Friday 29th March 2019.

Respectively, if you wish to attend the meeting, please RSVP by 5.00pm Wednesday 10 April 2019 to [admin@gympielandcare.org.au](mailto:admin@gympielandcare.org.au) to ensure we cater for all attendees.



## Management Committee Meeting

Our next Management Committee (MC) meeting will be held at 9.00am, Friday 26 April 2019.

Members are invited to observe and take part in the discussions in the meetings.



If you would like to add any items to the agenda in addition to the usual business of the meeting, please email [admin@gympielandcare.org.au](mailto:admin@gympielandcare.org.au) by the Friday before.

Respectively, if you wish to attend the MC meeting, please RSVP by 5.00pm Wednesday 24 April 2019 to [admin@gympielandcare.org.au](mailto:admin@gympielandcare.org.au) to ensure we cater for all attendees.

## Save the Date – Members Meetings 2019

The Committee hopes you can join us for the quarterly Member's meetings in 2019. This will be your opportunity to keep up to date with what is happening at Landcare and share your thoughts with the Committee and other Members.

**The dates for the meetings are as follows:**

**Wednesday 15 May at 10am**

**Saturday 3 August at 9am**

**Wednesday 27 November at 6pm**



There will be a call for agenda items 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

If you have an item for the agenda, please submit it in writing to [admin@gympielandcare.org.au](mailto:admin@gympielandcare.org.au) for consideration prior to the deadline.

We look forward to seeing you.

## Summary of the March Management Committee Meeting

To keep you up to date with what is happening at the Management Committee (MC) meetings we will be providing a summary of the important points discussed at the meeting every month. The Management Committee meetings take place on the 3rd Friday of each month. Due to the Easter holidays, the April meeting has been pushed back by 1 week and will take place on the 26th of April.

Due to the dry weather conditions, the Contract Landcare Services' work schedule will need to be revised as work cannot commence in this weather. It will also necessitate budget revision and discussions with the Council and various other customers.



1. Work continues on documenting the plumbing reticulation on site and planning approvals are being obtained to increase the size of the dam on the property to ensure more water for the nursery operations
2. The nursery manager has made a proposal with regard to the payment of a non-refundable deposit by the customer for large wholesale orders and additional charges if the stock is not fetched in a timely manner and we are required to store it on behalf of the customer. The proposal was accepted.
3. The Admin manager proposed revised pricing for the room hire which was also accepted. Further work will be done in the room to improve the flooring and access.
4. Gympie Landcare has moved onto a secure cloud-based system that will enable the team to work together more effectively. This system includes email, a calendar booking system and shared folder structure that can be accessed via the internet. This will increase efficiency and ensure a continuous history of all the organisation's activities is securely kept and backed up online. A big thanks to Lavina who has enabled this step forward in the organisation's transformation.
5. With the closing of Kingaroy Landcare, they have gifted Gympie Landcare some funds to put towards biocontrol. A letter of thanks will be sent from the secretary
6. The CLS manager has defined more closely the services and pricing for his team's services. His proposal was accepted and services will be detailed on the website in due course.

7. The marketing sub-committee was disbanded with all marketing activities now falling under the Admin manager's remit. The Admin manager will present a marketing and promotion program to the management committee once a year for approval.
8. The education sub-committee will also be transformed into an advisory board which will be managed by the Admin manager. Both these changes to the sub-committees will enable the admin manager to take responsibility and make decisions around the implementation of the work.
9. The HR sub-committee presented proposals on both the probation process and a proposed performance management process. They will continue work on refining the detail around the performance management process
10. Tony Perrett joined the meeting for the first hour and raised his concern around the lack of weed management on state-owned land.



## Caring for your rural block course

### Our very popular 'Blockies' course is on again in 2019

Owning a rural block gives you the opportunity to start an agricultural venture or hobby farm, maintain habitat for wildlife or create your dream living space. It also brings responsibilities to control weedy grasses, manage fire risks, maintain fences and manage vegetation and water resources.

Over ten consecutive weeks, Gympie & District Landcare Group will provide an overview of common property management issues in the Gympie region and introduce you to some local organisations.

**When:** The first session will commence Wednesday 6 February 2019, however, please contact our office for the full schedule. Sessions will commence at 9am and generally finish by 12.30pm, although sessions involving bus travel for field trips will require an earlier start.

**Where:** Some sessions will use the facilities at the Gympie & District Landcare Nursery at the corner of Groves Road and Old Maryborough Road.



Four sessions will involve bus travel to a variety of field sites and these sessions will depart from Gympie & District Landcare at 8.00am and return no later than 12.30pm. One of the bus trips may leave a little earlier and return a little later due to the travel distance from Gympie & District Landcare.



#### Cost:

#### 10 Week Course

Members: \$100.00

Non-Members: \$120.00

#### One off Sessions

To book for individual sessions, contact us on (07 5483 8866)

Members: \$10.00 for classroom sessions, \$25.00 for field trips.  
 Non-Members: \$12.00 for classroom sessions, \$30.00 for field trips.

Morning tea and cold drinks will be provided at each session and there will be toilet facilities on the bus for field trip days.

**Field trips:** You will travel by bus in air-conditioned comfort. As field sessions may involve walking up to 500m through paddocks and wooded areas, walking shoes, long trousers, hat, sunscreen, and a water bottle are recommended. Participants must have the capacity to walk through paddocks and stand for reasonable periods, however, walking will not be arduous nor on particularly steep grades. Feedback from the 2018 course identified field trips as the biggest highlight of the course.



**Presenters:** The program will be delivered by professionals, public servants and community members with specific knowledge in their field. Many presenters have a rural block in the Gympie Region, bringing first-hand experience of managing a property. In addition to the structured learning sessions, participants have the opportunity to share experience with people in similar situations and to discuss concerns with the presenters over morning tea breaks.

**Payment:** To register for our 2019 Blockies' Course, please contact us on (07) 5483 8866 to confirm your place or go online to [www.gympielandcare.org.au](http://www.gympielandcare.org.au). Casual or "one-off" sessions will be possible if space is available, however, priority will be given to people choosing to register for the full programme. Unfortunately, children are not permitted on this course.

## Would you like to become a member?

Gympie Landcare values your involvement and support. Members receive discounts on nursery plants, newsletters, and email notices.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_ GivenName/S \_\_\_\_\_  
 Residential Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If Different from above)  
 Home  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature:.....  
 Date:...../...../.....

Membership Price Table	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Individual	\$25.00	\$45.00	\$60.00
Family	\$37.50	\$67.50	\$90.00
Community Group/ Organisation	\$50.00	\$90.00	\$120.00

Life Membership: \$220.00  
 Method of Payment: Cash / Cheque/ Direct Deposit/ Other: \_\_\_\_\_