

In the International calendar, 2008 is the year of Planet Earth. It is also the year of the Reef, the Potato and for Chinese, the Rat.

CREEC has often pondered how best to get involved in World days :- displays, special events, joining other groups, sharing knowledge etc. If you have interests in these, let us know so we can pass on information to others. A newsletter contribution is welcome!

Clean up Australia - Some Facts (from BIEPA News Feb 2008)

- Australians are the highest producers of waste, per person, in the world.
- An estimated 7 billion cigarette butts end up in Australian waterways, streets and parklands each year.
- 80 million plastic bags are dumped in Australia each year, creating a serious threat to our precious marine life.
- Recyclable material makes up almost 80% of total household waste in Australia

3 Months to go...

Caboolture Sustainable Living Expo - Saturday 17 May 2008 - for more information contact **Wayne** at CREEC Phone - 3888 8751

This newsletter is produced and distributed by volunteers. We believe in its value in communicating information to members of our community who are interested in the environment and the work of CREEC. Contributions welcome

We thank the Caboolture Shire Council for their assistance.

Please recycle this newsletter by passing it to friends or neighbours.

Free Plant giveaway!

Please present this coupon at the CREEC Nursery, for your free plant

Offer valid to 31 March 2008



Caboolture Region
Environmental
Education Centre

This Newsletter is on the web at www.creec.org.au

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Clean up Australia Day
Sunday 2 March
Check times and places at www.cleanup.org.au

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Winner of Excellence in Business Award 2005

February 2008

What Should I Do?

CREEC should be an information source for almost everything to do with living sustainably, shouldn't it?

Since it is a Council site, everything Council can do, CREEC can do (better?).

Since it has volunteers in the office and nursery, and a large number of people in its specialist affiliated organisations, hardly anything escapes us. If we don't know, we can find out.

Since there are books, pamphlets, handouts, newsletters, fact sheets, computers and because we can Yahoo, Google, Alice, Wickie, or Land-map, there's no need to feel short of decision-making opportunities. It is not quite 100% of the above - it just lacks the personal touch to perfect it. Enquiries welcome!

If you need a list of things to do better or differently, so you reduce your negative impacts on the environment, start with Council's www.livingsmarthomes.net.au and work through the modules. You'll be so glad you did.

Sorry ... Sorry ... Sorry

Recycled Paper

BR

In a recent article in “Organic Gardener” magazine, Steve Lancaster looks at the environmental impact of paper use.



Paper manufacture is one of the major causes of deforestation, with over 15 million hectares of forest being lost each year. We can help to reduce this impact by greatly increasing our use of recycled paper.

Unfortunately it is very hard to find Australian produced recycled paper. There is currently no Australian-made, white recycled paper suitable for photocopying.

If we wish to use paper that has minimal environmental impact we should look for paper that

- is made from post-consumer waste (i.e. paper that has already been used) rather than pre-consumer waste (scraps and off-cuts).
- contains Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified pulp or it is not already totally post-consumer waste.
- is free of chlorine bleached fibres.
- is made in a mill that is certified under the Environmental management System or similar certification system.
- and is made in Australia.

At present there is very little Australian made Recycled paper so our best option is to buy recycled paper wherever possible even if it does come from overseas.

Hopefully this will encourage more Australian production.

Bamboo is the fastest growing, large woody plant, with about 14 million hectares of the world covered with it. About 20 million tonnes are harvested in Asia for paper, building, furniture and food every year, with a revenue in excess of \$5 billion.



In SEQ there are large clumps of Bambusa balcooa (previously B-arundinacea) some 100 years old. It is a nuisance, but not as invasive as the Golden Bamboo, (Phyllostachys aurea), a running type, banned by some councils and needing to be removed. It can be identified by the groove down the stem, between the nodes, on alternate sides.

All bamboos are expensive to remove once they mature, so it is best not to plant any of the running types, which originate in Japan, Korea and northern China, but grow very vigorously here. Even the common bamboo is spreading, in the absence of cattle to eat or trample the newly emerging shoots.

It is best to leave bamboos to specialist growers - there are 1500 species in 80 genera, so don't attempt to collect them all. There are some running green species that have taken off in a few places - a quite word about the need to get rid of these would be a stitch in time.

Promoters of bamboo believe that because it is such a prolific grower, it might be part of the solution to carbon dioxide build up, perhaps interplanted with deep-rooted gum trees.

Check Victor Cusack, “Bamboo Rediscovered” in the Library, catalogued 584.9 for more information.



Planning for Conservation

JP

Most of Caboolture Shire is over-cleared. There are few large areas of remnant bushland on land below 100m above sea level - possibly less than 10% of the coastal lowlands, between the foothills of the D'Aguilar Range and the Bruce highway. What chances are there of changing this situation? How would we restore landscapes no longer being used for dairying or pine forests? Is there a need to re-create habitat to conserve local flora and fauna?

Planning the restoration of landscapes for biodiversity needs decisions about key remnant areas to retain (at all cost, sometimes), what revegetation to undertake and how to manage the rest. Is priority given to expanding the size of remnants, creating linkages between them, widening the riparian corridors or ensuring that the vegetation contains undergrowth as well as canopy species?

Do we focus on particular species of plants and/or animals - koala trees, Aristolochia and the Richmond Birdwing butterfly, Glossy Blacks and Casuarinas - situations where the species are endangered? Or do we plan for multiple species, to meet the needs of most or all of the area's flora and fauna? The concept of umbrella species, where conservation is expected to confer protection to a large number of naturally co-occurring species, is a new approach, based on the various threats that are present.

The threats include habitat loss, predation, resource depletion, inappropriate fire regimes and inadequate quantitative information on what needs to be done. Such knowledge is needed to determine the minimum size of the conservation area, the selection of sites for inclusion in reserves and for setting standards for the quality of the habitats to be managed.

Bamboo

JP

Australia has over 1300 species of grasses, about 840 in Queensland. Of these there are only two species of bamboo, none native to South East Queensland (SEQ). There's a Northern Territory Arnhem Land species which was used for making didgeridoos long before these were made from hollowed out gum trees.

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BR

How Green is Green ?

Choice Magazine (June 2007) has an article on purchasing green-power from your electricity supplier. It shows big price differences between various schemes, dependent mainly on how much "green energy" is included in the scheme and whether that "green energy" is **accredited renewable energy**, or "GreenPower".



"GreenPower" is energy that comes from genuinely renewable sources built after 1997 and approved by the government GreenPower program. Some electricity companies offer renewable power that is not accredited (for example from old hydro-power systems). The cost of GreenPower varies significantly between different suppliers so it is important to check both the cost per KW hr and the percentage that is accredited.

Another option is to buy credits from companies which do not themselves market electricity, but will buy offsets on your behalf. Two mentioned in the Choice article are Climate Friendly (climatefriendly.com) and Greenswitch (greenswitch.com).

Several organisations now sell carbon offset certificates for a range of purposes, eg car use, aircraft travel. It is important to check whether they are accredited, and by whom and how the offset is achieved. Some will plant trees, while others invest in renewable energy schemes. While planting trees has many other advantages as well as carbon capture, a tree will take many years to absorb the carbon released by a single aircraft journey.

I recently bought an offset certificate for a plane trip where the money was used to buy high efficiency light bulbs to be given away at shopping centres!

Offsetting emissions is really a last resort, like recycling. It would be better and cheaper to use less energy in the first place. Easier said than done!

Corridors, Chooks, Weeds and Sustainable Production JP

SEQ Catchments is the NHT2 - funded body which is the lead organisation for delivering the integrated natural resources management plan and on-ground works for the south-east Qld. Region. In the Pumicestone, four projects are in progress:

1. Mountains to Mudflats. The Glasshouse Mountains National Park consists of four disconnected reserves, each with a spectacular trachyte or rhyolite peak. State Forestry reserves protect six other hills. The land between the Glasshouses is largely forest plantation and agriculture with many smaller subdivisions. The project aims to reconnect the bushland areas so as to provide corridors for wildlife, perhaps as part of nature refuges, land for wildlife or similar conservation management systems. Incentives for land owners to provide protection are proposed.

Along the Pumicestone Passage foreshore, obvious environmental damage is occurring to samphire, marine couch and mangrove areas, from unregulated recreational use and entry to sensitive areas. It is anticipated that the project can reduce the rate of increase of disturbance to these fragile ecosystems.

2. Poultry Industry Incentives. Financial support has been offered to allow growers to reduce the impacts from intensive poultry production methods on water quality. As there was little interest from chicken meat producers, funding is being diverted to projects aimed at improving the on-farm use of chicken litter.

3. Upper Caboolture Water Supply Catchment. Changing land uses are impacting on the vegetation adjacent to the River, with deleterious effects on water resources. Landowners often regard the difficulties in controlling weeds as the highest priority for keeping their country in good order. Support for managing weeds of economic and environmental concern is being offered to participants in the project.

4. Sustainable Agricultural Production. The Pumicestone Region has the highest diversity of farming enterprises and associated

land uses in Australia. With changes in social, economic and environmental values, producers need to ensure not only that their enterprise is sustainable in the long term, but also that any downstream impacts are minimised. Lyngbya blooms in the Passage and Deception-Bay are linked to some land use practices. Incentives are available for growers of horticultural crops such as pineapples, turf, nursery, strawberries etc to better manage soil and nutrient losses from their enterprises. Inter-bed plantings to reduce runoff and hence soil erosion and plantings of vetiver grass along drainage lines are proving of value, except when major storm events occur.

Contact PRCCA by email: prcca@bigpond.com for further information.

Embodied Energy

JP

There is little relationship between the price we pay for things and the real cost of their production and distribution. In today's energy conscious society, the concept of embodied energy – how much energy a product uses during its lifetime, in putting it together, moving it around, using it and disposing of it at the end of its life, becomes an important consideration. The true cost of a product needs to take into account its impact on the environment, not just how much energy it consumes when it is being used.

A few bits of information to get you interested :

- ◆ The embodied energy in your house is about 1000 gigajoules or 33 years of average energy consumption
- ◆ Life cycle analysis of rainwater tanks showed that galvanised steel tanks are a better choice than plastic or reinforced concrete
- ◆ Aluminium contains 340 times as much embodied energy as air-dried sawn hardwood
- ◆ US producers can make a computer for one third of the O₂ emissions of China; however it is financially cheaper and better, for the US greenhouse record to import – pity the global environment and climate change effects of doing this
- ◆ NZ apples in Britain are one third of the energy cost of local apples, lamb one quarter. Food miles are only part of the calculation