

CREEC
150 Rowley Road
BURPENGARY Q

Saturday 2 June 2007

OPEN INVITATION - SUSTAINABLE LIVING FAIR

10.15 am Opening - Cr. Joy Leishman (Caboolture Shire Mayor)

10.30 am Top Ten Tips for Sustainable Living

11.00 am From Brick Box to Urban Oasis

11.30 am Water Target 140

12.00 noon Climate Smart Homes

12.30 pm Wilderness Society

Permaculture, plants stall, raffle, wildlife, worms, music, dancing, waste management, recycling, guided walks, food, train rides.

1.30 pm Sustainable Transport.

2.00 pm Towards Sustainable Housing



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

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.

We thank the Caboolture Shire Council for their assistance.



Caboolture Region
Environmental
Education Centre
Ph : 3888 8751
Fax : 3888 3211
Email :marshw@caboolture.qld.gov.au

We're on the web
www.creec.org.au

Inside this issue:

Myall Park Page 2

Community Views on Water Page 3

Biological Monitoring of Caboolture River Page 4

Fauna friendly Gardens Page 6

Lantana Page 6

Strictly for the Birds Page 7

Sustainable Living Fair Page 8

Friends of CREEC
Winner of
Excellence in
Business Award
2005



May 2007

Heigh-Ho , Come To The Fair

Recycling, water conservation, energy efficiency and caring for the catchment are just a handful of topics to be featured at the sixth annual Sustainable Living Fair being held at the **Caboolture Region Environmental Education Centre (CREEC) from 10am to 3.30pm Saturday 2 June at 150 Rowley Road Burpengary.**

There will be over 40 stallholders and displays at this Year's Fair. They will showcase a number of ways that you can save money and at the same time improve the sustainability of the environment around you.

Our guest speakers will cover such topics as how to reduce electricity bills, be water wise, adopt Permaculture, recycling and other sustainable practices. For a full program visit our web site.

Activities for children include the Ronnie K Train, Bunnings face painting and tattoos, seed planting, native animals and insects, koalas, drawing and making paper and scarecrows. Parents and children attending the Fair will also be able to take advantage of regular tours which cover parts of the 18 hectare bush and rainforest reserve, either by guided walks or aboard the train.

There will be time to sit down and listen to some great music while enjoying the different kinds of food available. Car parking is available inside the centre. Entry to the Fair is free, however a gold coin donation is appreciated as the Fair is run by Friends of CREEC, a non-profit community organization.

For more information, visit our web site (above) or contact Wayne at CREEC on 3888 8751.

David Gordon and Myall Park Botanic Garden

Why would a western grazier with 20,000 hectares of land, develop and then pass it on to the people, a botanic gardens? Why collect semi-arid zone plants and waterlilies from all over Australia and plant them on a hungry ridge and a lagoon to see how they perform?

Quite early in his working life, David Gordon, fifth of nine children, born near Ballarat on 9 July 1899, dreamed of creating a garden of beautiful Australian flowering plants.

At about the same time, prickly pear (introduced 50 years earlier “for the good of the colony”) started its march into the brigalow country of Queensland. Fearing it as a grave danger to the grazing industry, the government made available land to people willing to take up selections. The Lands Department advertised the Group Settlement Scheme in all larger Victorian towns. The scheme enticed the Gordons to take up a Prickly Pear Selection on the Balonne River in 1909, next door to the wealthy James Rutherford of Cobb and Co fame, from whom sheep were bought. Half of these were drowned in the 1911 flood.

David's father died, his elder brother enlisted and it was left to the 15 year-old to run the property. He tried cattle and cotton, without success. Various methods of controlling prickly pear were tried – cutting, burning, poisoning – all hard work, slow, relentless. Leases were surrendered as the pear spread. The Gordons bought a 28,500 acre block called The Myalls in 1926 and then leased surrounding blocks at two and sixpence per square mile per year; eventually holding 52,000 ac.(21000 ha).

Fortunately the Cactoblastis moth, with its larvae tunnelling inside the pear, devoured millions of infested acres of pear – perhaps the world's most successful biological control ever. (Pity about the cane toad, introduced to control cane beetles).

The personal story of David Gordon is told in “One Man's Dream” by Betty McKenzie. It tells of Myall Park, north of Glenmorgan, the first plantings of native species in 1940, the collecting trips into the interior, the association with the Queensland Herbarium, the building of the lake by

- avoid barbed wire or solid fencing that causes injury or restricts movements
- keep dogs and cats on your own property, and restrained at night
- don't encourage pest species by planting the wrong plants, or leaving food out for scavengers
- don't build a fish pond just outside a bedroom window
- encourage your neighbours to be wildlife-friendly.

Kay Brooks

Strictly for the Birds

South East Queensland is the most diverse area for birds in all Australia. Over half of all Australian species are found here, with more than 400 species recorded in Caboolture Shire.

The reasons for this abundance of birds are twofold. Firstly the region has many diverse habitats, from Moreton Bay to Mt Mee, Bribie Island to Burpengary Creek. Secondly, S.E. Queensland is where the northern (or Torresian) warmer regions meet the southern (or Bassian) temperate region.

If you want to know more about this fascinating part of our local diversity, there are several options to get you started as a birder.

You Can:

- Join the CABBOS (Caboolture Bird Observers), a group within the Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld, Caboolture Branch. CABBOS meet usually on the 3rd Wednesday of each month for a morning excursion. Details are available in the WPS newsletter.
- Attend bird identification workshops at CREEC. The next one will be on raptors (birds of prey) on 14 July 9.30am – 12.00pm.
- Become involved in the Fauna Watch program, recording what you see is a great way of improving your recognition skills.
- For some reason (drought? rising temperatures? land clearing?) some of our northern birds are being seen further south more frequently.
- Just recently, nine cotton pygmy geese arrived at Norfolk Lakes Narangba, for the second autumn in succession. Normally not usually found this far south, they were recorded for the first time in Caboolture Shire last year.

BR

Lantana – a threatened species?

There are over 600 varieties of lantana in the world; Australia has at least 29 of these. Lantana is considered to be one of the ten worst weeds worldwide. We have more than 4 million hectares of lantana-infested land in eastern Australia. It is a Weed Of National Significance. Lantana seed is viable for four years so preventing its seeding for five years will completely deplete the existing seed bank. What methods are best for control vary. Combinations of mechanical, chemical, fire and manual methods of control are possible. The choice depends on land use, size of the infestation, what resources are available, climate and the weather. Biological control methods are still being trialled. A rust fungus has recently been released, and approval is being sought to introduce a leaf miner and a bud mite.

Fauna-friendly Gardens

Removal of habitat is the major cause of the loss of wildlife from the suburbs. Add to this the impacts of ourselves – motor vehicles, cats, dogs, mowers, fences, pools, windows, poisons, disinterest – and it is no wonder that wildlife is in retreat. There are a few exceptions, such as lorikeets, crows, possums, marsh frogs and ants.

As we better understand the relationships between ourselves and wildlife, we need a new perspective. We have to develop a keener sense of the beauty and intricacy of our surroundings. We need to understand, protect and preserve biodiversity, to renew our connection with the bush in our own backyards.

Here are a few tips on how to make your garden safer and more friendly to your local wildlife.

- provide a shelter – a wild corner with logs, leaf litter and rocks; erect nest boxes if you can
- place water in clean, shallow containers in the shade
- plant native vegetation for food, shelter and nesting sites
- avoid unnecessary use of chemicals and poisons
- take care when mowing or brush-cutting
- place a rope or plank in the pool to help prevent drowning

Joh Bjelke-Petersen, the expedition to Stanthorpe for plants, where he met 17 year old Dorothy, (later his wife and an expert wildflower painter), the Myall Park Herbarium of 7000 specimens, the development of the garden open to visitors, the appearance of the grevillea hybrids named after Robyn, Sandra and Merinda Gordon, the gifting of the Botanic Garden to a Committee in 1988 and a pristine block of 877 ha as Erringibba National Park in 1989, and much more.

Spanning three centuries, the 102 year life of David Gordon will be remembered for his achievements in growing Australian plants and passing on his knowledge of them. Every year people visit Myall Park for the special events, others stay a day or two to walk the trails, yet others to volunteer their time to enhance the garden, collecting seeds, propagating, track building, cleaning up. Some members of the Caboolture Daytime Branch of SCAP recently spent a few days doing all of those things – for the third year in a row.

Community Views on Water Shortages and Conservation

Last year a survey of residents in each of the capital cities, except Brisbane, was conducted to obtain their attitudes to a number of water issues.

Some of the findings:

- City dwellers rated water shortages as of little concern – 11th behind crime, roads, cost of living, polluted environment, health services, petrol prices, education, unemployment, poor government, terrorism and overcrowding.
- 22% of respondents believed they could do a lot more to save water, but 69% believed that others can do much more than they can.
- 20% claimed they didn't know enough about what they can do to save water.
- The strongest motivation to save water was to make sure they didn't run out (42-52%), followed by caring for the environment (32-37%) and with saving money (15-21%).

- 16% of people perceived that the quality of their life had been impacted by their need to save water; 31% felt they would be annoyed if restrictions became tougher.
- Only 33% of respondents trusted the authorities to ensure an adequate future water supply.
- People most trusted CSIRO, the Universities and EPA to provide information on the water situation (7.4 down to 6.9 out of 10) Water utilities rated 6 out of 10, journalists 4.2, TV personalities 3.7 and politicians 3.3

Just over half of the respondents believed that the water situation will get worse over the next five years, 20% thought it would improve. 70% of people thought that there is no likelihood of a technological solution to resolve the water shortage. Only 10% believed that a technical fix will be found.

One of the conclusions from the Cooperative Research Centre for Water Quality and Treatment study was that to achieve sustainable water resource use, water authorities must keep the matter of shortages and conservation continuously on the community agenda. It makes you wonder what local attitudes are – as we accept the current situation, worry about the future, resist tougher water restrictions or accept that eventually it will rain.

Biological Monitoring of Caboolture River

As part of the Caboolture River Catchment Management Project funded by SEQ Catchments and Caboolture Shire Council, the biological health of sections of the River and Wararba Creek was recently assessed. Some of the sites selected were the same as used in 2001 and 2002, enabling comparisons to be made between now and five years ago.

Water quality at the sites was also measured. Council has been sampling for many years, at a number of places, on a routine basis for a number of chemical parameters such as salinity, alkalinity, pH, dissolved oxygen, turbidity and temperature. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has guideline values for some of these. There is some discussion as to the value of water

“chemistry” versus the kinds and numbers of aquatic animals in a creek habitat, in assessing stream health. Compliance with both is preferable.

All of the sites had a low dissolved oxygen level due to the high levels of leaf litter which were decomposing in shallow water, with no flow or wind activity to aerate it.

The number of families of macro-invertebrates found indicated that the sites were significantly impaired, with fewer present than might be expected. Where comparisons could be made between years, the water quality was better five years ago. This may be due to drought conditions whereby lack of flow in the creeks has contributed to a build up of organic matter, with a consequent increase in the food supply for a number of decomposer organisms.

Surprisingly there were 54 families present in each of the years; the high diversity suggests that high levels of pollution-tolerant families are present. The researchers reported that low to moderate levels of nutrient enrichment are likely to be contributing to the diversity, as well as the wide variety of stream habitats present.

Clearly there is room for improvements in land use in the upper catchments of Caboolture River.

JP

Did you know?

Only 0.5% of Australia’s farmland is irrigated, but the gross value of irrigated production is 25% of the total. Horticulture uses only 16% of the extracted water, while producing more than 50% of the returns from irrigated farming.

40,000 farms are irrigated; they use 10 million ML of water and produce \$9 billion worth of produce. Given the big difference between the producers’ prices and retail, about \$3,000 of your annual household food bill comes from irrigated agriculture.