



Whitsunday  
Catchment  
Landcare

## Newsletter

Nov.2024



### Coming up this month: Tree planting at Galbraith Park 21/11/24



Come and help us to turn this...



...into this!

**Where:** Galbraith Park, Galbraith Park Drive Cannonvale, look for the signs and open gate on the community garden side of the park.

**When:** Thursday 21-11-2024, starting at 8am until about noon; the finishing time is weather dependant.

**What:** Tree planting in the next section of the embankment opposite Beames Crescent. Bring sun protective clothing, a hat, water bottle and closed-in shoes. We will provide gloves, tools water refills and some light morning tea. The satisfaction of watching them grow is included for free!

### Save the dates: Reefclean beach clean ups this December

**Conway & Wilson Beaches:**

Mon 9th December with counting/ sorting  
finishing on the 10th Dec

**Bowen (Don River Mouth & Queens Beach):**

Tuesday 10th December with counting/  
sorting finishing on the 11th Dec

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## Community Nursery activities:

**Where:** 33 Kelsey Creek Rd Proserpine

**When:** Tuesday & Thursday mornings 9am to 12 noon.

**What:** Plant propagation, native seed sowing & preparation, nursery maintenance tasks and a great morning tea with a fantastic bunch of volunteers.

**What to bring:** Please wear sun protection and closed-in shoes.



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## Landcare nursery open Sat. 2nd November...AND Sat. 16th Nov.

**Where:** 33 Kelsey Creek Rd Proserpine

**When:** 9 am to 12 noon Tuesday & Thursday, & the 1st & 3rd Saturday each month. EFTPOS available.

**What:** A huge range of local native plants grown from locally collected seed, at great prices from \$3.50. Gift vouchers available for a gardener you know. Knowledgeable staff & volunteers are on hand for friendly advice.

We're opening 2 Saturdays each month for a few months, to see if it allows more people to access the community nursery. Come along and take a look!



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**Correction to the October 'What's showing':** Queensland Herbarium have now adopted *Malaisia scandens* and retired the old name *Trophis scandens*. Thanks to member Irene Champion, of Native Plants Queensland (Mackay Branch), for the update.

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## What's showing:

### *Mimusops elengi*

**Family:** Sapotaceae

**Common name:** Red Coondoo, Spanish Cherry

**Scientific name:** *Mimusops elengi*

**Description:** An evergreen tree growing to 10-15m in height with a dense, shady crown.

**Distribution:** Found across northern Australia in coastal vine thickets and drier rainforest types up to 600m elevation. Central Queensland is the southern limit of its range on the east coast.

**Leaves:** Oval, smooth, thick, leathery and crowded on the stems. Young leaves are hairy. Lateral veins form loops inside the leaf margin. Glossy dark-green above, paler underneath. There is a prominent mid-rib and a pointed tip. 5-14cm long and 2.5-6cm wide.

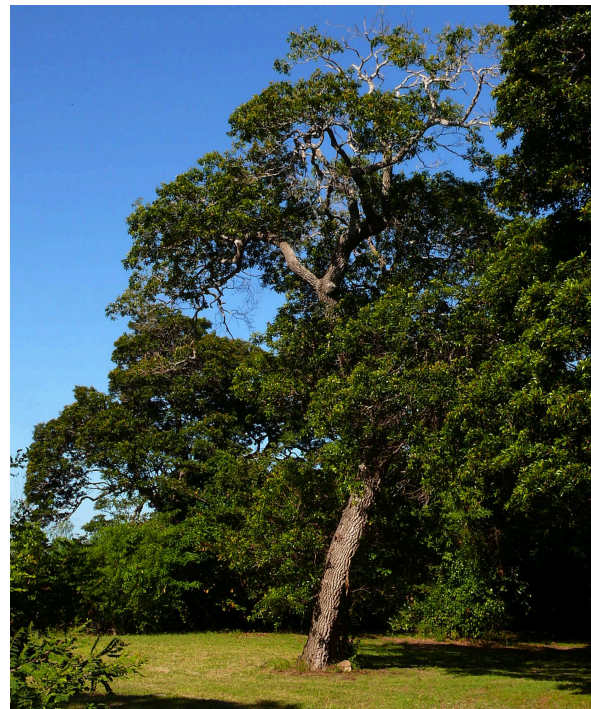
**Bark:** The bark of mature trees has deep tessellations giving it a beautiful corky appearance.

**Flowers:** Cream coloured, hairy and perfumed, in clusters in the upper leaf axils. 0.5-1cm in size. They are thought to be mostly wind pollinated. The flowers are used for their scent, as the perfume persists for a long time in the dead flowers.

**Fruit:** 'Jaffa'-like berries, egg-shaped, bright orange. Starting hairy and becoming smooth, around 1-2 cm in size. Each contains 1-2 hard brown seeds. The floury textured fruits are edible. In some cultures they are pickled, but they can also be eaten raw. They are said to taste a bit like a dry-ish date.

**Notes:** A hardy, compact and attractive shade or street tree for coastal areas and useful for dune/ beach stabilisation. Adaptable to a variety of soil types and can tolerate seasonal inundation. Wind and salt tolerant. Suited to full sun but can tolerate shading. It is said to be slow growing, however this may depend on soil type and water availability.

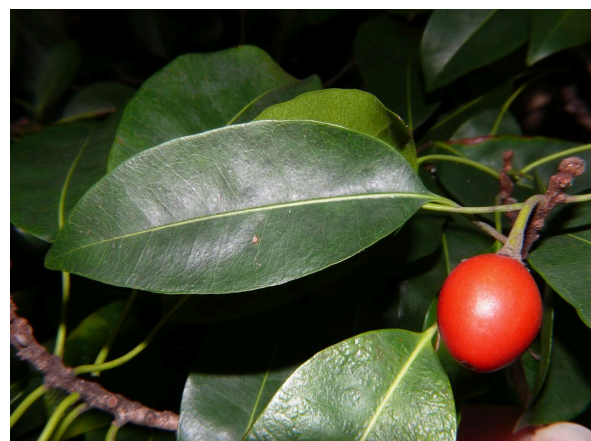
This tree is an important food source for



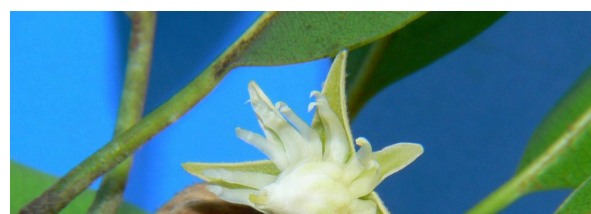
Mature tree. PHOTO: Steve Pearson



Bark of mature tree. PHOTO: CP



Fruits and leaves PHOTO: Steve Pearson



wildlife, including Torres Strait Pigeons (*Ducula bicolor*). It has a very hard, reddish, durable timber. This species is mentioned in the Ayurveda and has a wide range of traditional medicinal uses in different cultures.

#### What's in a Name?

*Mimusops* comes from the Greek word *mimos*, an imitator or mimic, and *opsis*, the face - the corolla and the shape of the flowers resemble a monkey's face. *elengi* is the Malayalam name of the species.



Flowers. PHOTO: Steve Pearson

#### References:

Dictionary of Botanical Names, Don Perrin

<https://sOMEMAGNETICISLANDPLANTS.COM.AU/red-coondoo>

[https://apps.lucidcentral.org/rainforest/text/entities/mimusops\\_elengi.htm](https://apps.lucidcentral.org/rainforest/text/entities/mimusops_elengi.htm)

<https://tropical.theferns.info/viewtropical.php?id=Mimusops+elengi>

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## At the nursery this month: *Gossia bidwilli*

If you would like to try growing something a little different, we have seedlings of *Gossia bidwilli* (used to be *Austromyrtus*) or Python Tree/ Lignum vitae available now. The seed came from a volunteer's property near Pioneer Bay last year. Since this species fruits erratically and its seed cannot be stored, we don't know when we will have them again.



Seedlings with new growth. PHOTO: JS

They are slow growing and long lived, usually growing to around 6m. The wood is extremely dense and hard, so that the trunk actually feels cold to the touch, like stone. New growth is a lovely bronze colour. When they do flower they are covered in white 5-petalled flowers with yellow stamens, followed by round fruits that are black when ripe.

They grow naturally in dry rainforest and beach scrub, on both sandy and clay soils.

More info:

<https://sOMEMAGNETICISLANDPLANTS.COM.AU/plants/scrub-python-tree>



Bark patterns when mature PHOTO: JS

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## Rufous bettongs (*Aepyprymnus rufescens*) By Dale Mengel



If you are one for venturing out at night out of suburbia, you may have come across what some describe as a "rat kangaroo", a quite small, hopping marsupial that somewhat looks like a cross between a large rat and a kangaroo - hence their colloquial name. These creatures are called Bettongs, and there is only one species of Bettong that occurs locally in this Region - the Rufous Bettong (*Aepyprymnus rufescens*). This is the largest and most widely found of all Bettongs. The name "*rufescens*" refers to their reddish-brown coat colour, although many are more on the grey side and don't always exhibit the rufous tinge.

Like wallabies and kangaroos, they are marsupials, that is, the females have a specialised pouch for the raising of their young.

Rufous Bettongs live predominantly in open conditions from sea level to plateau tops. They thrive in grassy woodlands, coastal eucalypt forests, wet sclerophyll, and in low dry open woodlands with grassy understorey (Strahan, 1995). All Rufous Bettongs build conical-shaped nests that have one entrance. Nests can be found in the hollows of fallen trees, under bushes, in grass clumps, or more rarely in open ground. They use materials such as grass, hay, straw, dry ferns, and fibrous vegetation to build their nests. They pick this material up with their forepaws and pass it down the body to the tail which places the material in the nest. They use up to five nests at any one time, and it has been proposed that nest building may only occur in the winter. On a monthly basis new nests are added as old nests are abandoned, and abandoned nests may be rebuilt and used by a neighbouring bettong. They are predominantly solitary animals with one nest containing one bettong, although a male may have a number of females in his territorial range.

They are strictly nocturnal and emerge shortly after sunset to begin the search for food, which comprises a variety of grasses, herbaceous plants, and use their well-adapted fore-claws to dig for roots, tubers, and underground fungi. They can extract enough water from this diet to forego drinking altogether except in times of drought, when they may excavate holes in creek beds to attempt to reach the water level for a drink (Nowak, 1997).

Next time you are out at night, keep a close eye out for these little creatures which are a fairly common sight in the correct habitat.

Note: According to Bush Heritage Australia, bettongs and bandicoots are important ecological engineers; their burrowing for food and shelter creates the ideal conditions for the germination of plant seeds. Their activity also spreads the beneficial fungi that help plants to extract food and

water from the soil as they grow. These little guys play an important part in the local ecology.

<https://www.bushheritage.org.au/species/bettongs>

For more about local wildlife, you might like to join the Facebook group that Dale moderates: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wildlifemackaywhitsundays>  
It's one of the happiest places you will find on Facebook!!

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## Avian flu might be here: watch out for and report sick birds

Source: Birdlife Australia <https://birdlife.org.au/avian-influenza/>

Avian Influenza, or bird flu, is an infectious disease of birds caused by strains of Influenza A virus. It affects poultry and wild birds and can be spread to mammals including humans. The H5N1 strain is a highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) being closely monitored by Australian authorities due to the potential risk of spread to Australia.

Large-scale outbreaks of the H5N1 strain of bird flu in the past two years have killed millions of wild birds and tens of thousands of mammals around the world. H5N1 bird flu has spread to all continents apart from Australia and experts predict it could arrive here with the spring migration of shorebirds and seabirds from the Northern Hemisphere.

Numerous dead birds in a location, including small groups or clusters (five or more) of wild birds of any species could be a sign that H5N1 has infected local populations and should be reported. Individual dead birds, or fewer than five sick or dead wild birds, should be reported if they are seabirds, waterbirds, shorebirds or birds of prey.

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### What should I do if I see or find a sick or dead bird?

#### AVOID

Avoid contact with sick or dead wildlife and their environment. Do not allow pets to touch or eat sick or dead wildlife.



#### RECORD

Record what you see, the location the animal was found, and take photos or video if possible, without approaching the bird (see below).



#### REPORT

Report any unusual illness or death in wild birds and other wildlife immediately via the **Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.**

#### Details that will assist the response include:

- Location (address and/or GPS coordinates if possible)
- Date and time of the sighting (and when signs of disease were first noticed)
- The estimated number of sick or dead animals and other animals at the site
- Notes of any clinical signs that sick animals are showing
- Contact details of any observers



Scan here for more information

## Weed Hall of Fame:

### *Catharanthus roseus*

**Common names:** Pink Periwinkle, Madagascan periwinkle

**Family:** Apocynaceae

**Form:** Perennial herb or sub-shrub 0.6-1m tall with white milky sap.

**Origin:** Madagascar, where, amazingly, this species is endangered.

**Leaves:** Simple Opposite  
Simple opposite oval, 25-90 x 10-35mm, leathery glossy dark green.

**Flowers:** Conspicuous, slender and tubular with 5 spreading lobes; dark pink or white and darker in the centre.

**Fruit:** Inconspicuous, paired dry cylindrical follicles, 20-40 x 3mm; with numerous black oblong seeds 20-25mm long.

**Spread by:** Dumped garden waste, water and wind over short distances. Invades disturbed areas such as fire scars, tracks and clearings.

**Invades:** A pest of some agricultural systems (e.g. sugar cane), it has the ability to invade almost everywhere except closed rainforest and wetlands. It has been nominated as one of the 10 worst weeds currently available for sale in Queensland and it has a weed history in many places overseas. It prefers sandy soils and tropical conditions and is wide-spread in coastal regions of northern Australia.

**Notes:** Here it can form a dense monoculture, preventing regrowth of native species.

**Manual control:** In sandy soils this plant can be easily hand weeded. Ensure that all parts of the plant are removed, bagged and kept out of composting and green waste recycling systems. For big masses of new seedlings in loose soil, they can be hoed or raked up and disposed of. They should be bagged and disposed of in landfill. Regular follow up weeding is necessary to remove re-growth until control is achieved.

#### **Herbicide control:**

Foliar spraying with Triclopyr 300g/L and Picloram 100g/L. This is approved for use on



*Flowers and leaves. PHOTO: PA*



*Green seed pods. PHOTO: Steve Pearson*



*Seeds. PHOTO: Steve Pearson*



*Infestation in burnt beach scrub at Brampton*

small infestations of environmental weeds in non-cropping areas under AVPMA [Permit 11463](#)

Island. PHOTO: JS

References:

<https://cqclandcarenetwork.org.au/plants/pink-periwinkle/>

[https://www.aabr.org.au/images/stories/resources/ManagementGuides/WeedGuides/wmg\\_periwinkle.pdf](https://www.aabr.org.au/images/stories/resources/ManagementGuides/WeedGuides/wmg_periwinkle.pdf)

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This piece was quietly placed at the end of a little text book about the uses and qualities of Queensland timbers, loaned to WCL by a member. Produced by the Queensland Forestry Service in 1963, it shows how much things have changed, and at the same time, how much they have not.

### **"THE LOSS OF A TREE"**

As I passed by I looked and saw what YOU had done. You had cut it a foot above the ground, all around lay the chunks of its white flesh, splattered from the axe. It fell so easily. It did not fight back at all. Its pride and majesty were so easily humbled, flung at your feet, a wreckage of broken branches and mangled leaves.

Did you see the long shudder before its fall, I wonder? Did you hear the sigh of the leaves, the wrenching cry as it strained, then crashed before you?

It exists no longer. But all around it, in the earth and in the air, war has been declared against YOU.

The air for your breathing is less sweet than before. The birds have forsaken you; leaving the insect pests and rodents to their work of destruction. The wind will batter you more harshly. The rain will belt the earth more piteously, its fall unbroken by that leafy screen. The unanchored soil will be stolen away by the rivulets of wasted water...

That tree did not fight back, but its friends will fight for it. And long after the needless felling of the tree has been forgotten, their revenge will continue...



Queensland Forestry Service Publication No.4, Valuable Queensland Timbers, C.J.J. Watson, 1963.

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## How you can help:

### VOLUNTEER:

If you're interested in doing your bit for the local environment and socialising with like-minded people, we have volunteer activities on Tuesday & Thursday mornings and more. Contact us!



### MAKE A DONATION:

WCL is a community not-for-profit. We rely on donations to assist with our projects such as revegetation. WCL is registered charity; donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. To donate, please contact us or go to the [GiveNow Donations Portal](#)



## WCL TEAM

Coordinator & secretary: Christine Peterson  
Admin/finance: Leigh Donkers  
Field Staff: Kayla Simpson, Rory Richards  
Nursery Manager: Nicole Murphy

WCL Management Committee:  
Jacquie Sheils, Chair, newsletter editor  
Jim Dickens, Treasurer  
Canegrowers rep. John Casey  
Paul Jukes  
One Community position vacant

## CONTACT

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[0483 811 229](tel:0483811229)

### CONTACT US FOR INFORMATION ON

- Natural Resource Management
- Land Management Plans
- Native Plants
- Environmental Weeds
- Volunteer Activities



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