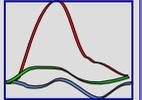




The Kedron Brook Babbler



The Newsletter of Kedron Brook Catchment Branch - Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland
 Covering the environmental interests of the individuals, groups and organisations living in and near the Kedron Brook catchment, Brisbane, Australia

February 2011

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*'We must rediscover
 the distinction between
 hope and expectation'*

(Ivan Illich, 1926-2002)

Special interest points:

- *Salvinia is no lady.*
- *Milky Mangroves are full of toxic sap!*
- *Railway travellers will need binoculars to see lorikeets!*
- *Myrtle rust another triumph for our import industry?*

Keperra to Ferny Grove Rail Upgrade Project

The Keperra to Ferny Grove Rail Upgrade project involves duplicating 2.6 km of track between Keperra and Ferny Grove Stations to increase rail capacity and improve reliability on the Ferny Grove line. The Ferny Grove station will also be upgraded with disability access and commuter car parking boosted to around 1000 spaces.

Unfortunately, this comes at a major price; namely the removal of all significant vegetation at the Ferny Grove car park presently contributing to the existing bushland atmosphere. All of the Forest Red Gum and Spotted Gum trees (currently housing many lorikeets nightly) will be removed. After years of suffering the pressure of car parking in close proximity to the tree roots, the trees have been slowly dying. But even if this were not so, they would still be removed to meet the progressive target of increased car parking and anticipated business development.

Regrettably, the large shady fig tree outside the station entrance in Conavalla Street is within the location of a new track alignment and is also to be removed very soon, along with all of the gums and other trees. (See yellow cross on the fig in picture on right.)

It is planned that wildlife spotter catchers



Market at Ferny Grove Railway Car Park

will inspect the trees and relocate any wildlife or nests to appropriate locations before tree removal works start. One wonders about how this could in fact be done, especially for the lorikeets.

The project planners believe that '...there is expected to be a minimal long-term effect on local birdlife

(Continued on page 4)



Children enjoy large shady fig tree at Ferny Grove railway station

Floods and bank erosion concerns

South East Queensland Healthy Waterways put a most interesting [news item](#) on their web site, 'Impact of SEQ flooding on waterway health'. The recent rainfall events have left the whole of SEQ completely saturated. As a result, the rain water had no choice but to runoff. And so it did!

There has been quite a bit of creek bank erosion along Kedron Brook as well as the occasional scouring of the creek beds (noted at Wahminda Park). Although we have not suffered to the same degree as catchments adjoining the Brisbane River there still are areas of concern.

The picture (right) shows properties along McConaghy St, Mitchelton, being threatened by bank erosion downstream from Pony Club Bend. Brisbane City Council plans to conduct emergency repairs early in February.

The Wetlands Water Treatment Facility at



Properties threatened by land slip at McConaghy St., Mitchelton

Thomsett Park, Ferny Hills, is at risk due to rapid erosion of Kedron Brook's banks. Moreton Bay Regional Council, with technical design assistance from Brisbane City Council, are working over the next three weeks or so to stabilise the banks of the wetland to save the existing infrastructure.

(CI)



A recent article on the internet noted that the giant DOW Chemical corporation will be working with The Nature Conservancy on a project aimed at establishing the business value that ecosystem services represent. Whilst this may be a drop in a pretty turgid ocean, the fact that big business is now starting to value what traditional economics has always taken as "free" is an important step. When you see the difference between how degraded and healthy rivers handle floods as of late, the point is hammered home.



Flood debris at the outfall of Kedron Brook into Moreton Bay with sections of a floating walkway out in the bay
(Robert Standish-White)

The floods may also hold lessons for us in wider catchment issues, largely stemming from widespread change of land use. Urban catchments such as our own have become significantly harder, with hectares of tin and tarmac chucking water into the creek at far accelerated rates, reducing permeation and increasing channel damage. We need to lobby for more sympathetic civil and urban design, so we can treat storm events as

natural rather than fearful.

In this Year of the Forest it behoves us to remind ourselves of the critical role trees play in all catchments. Good tree cover encourages transpiration and infiltration, provides photosynthesis, wind-breaks and erosion control, and the anchor for many others systems. Crucial for habitat, they concomitantly provide sources of food and medicine, fuel and building material, not to mention visual appeal and cultural significance.

Mangroves protect coastlines from aggressive wave action while acting as a nursery for many marine species. Trees in cities significantly reduce temperature, improve air quality and provide a vital link for the majority of humankind to the ecosystems they finally have to rely on. Loss of trees has preceded the downfall of many societies, from Easter Island to

(Continued on page 4)

Hello again.

No New Years Resolutions yet... too many things left over from last year!

I'm hopeful of spending some time updating bushcare group pages in the Bushcare Group section of the web site soon. I'm getting nice pictures in from some of the groups!

We had another great catchment tour on 30 January. As always, our success was achieved due to the time and effort put in by our bushcare groups, in this case, Wahminda Grove and Sparkes Hill. A vital part was also supplied by volunteers and staff from our neighbouring Boondall Wetlands Environmental Centre as guides and technical advisers. Thanks for your efforts!

Given the vital part played by flying foxes in our environment, I'm glad our next branch and network meeting's presentation by Drs. Monika and Martin Rhodes will provide some further information on the ecology of bats. The introduction to some real little charmers by Louise Sanders (Bat Conservation and Rescue) and friend on the tour left us all wanting to learn more about these misunderstood creatures.

Cheers !

Charles Ivin

Snippets

Glider surveys

The latest glider survey in early January was enjoyable though it yielded less exciting discoveries. Less animals were seen on the evening and no gliders were sighted. The group did see several possums (common brush-tail and ring tail), as well as an eastern water dragon, flying fox, kingfisher and a cicada that had just emerged from its ground dwelling shell. The third and final glider survey will be held in early April.

(Anna Bourke)

Bat facts

Insectivorous bats sleep during the day in tree hollows, under bark, in caves and in man-made structures, such as houses or mines. They feed on insects, scorpions and some on small lizards and hunt at night for these with the help of their sonar system (echolocation). Insect eating bats are very small, with weights ranging from 5 to 300 grams. All bats are furred, give birth to live young, and suckle their young in their first months.

Learn more at our meeting on the 15 February!

(Philip Rowland)

Myrtle rust found in Queensland

Myrtle rust (*Uredo rangelii*) is a serious fungal disease that is closely related to eucalyptus/guava rust, and part of a group of rusts that infect the plant Myrtaceae.

Myrtle rust was first detected in Australia in April 2010 at a cut flower nursery in New South Wales. In December 2010, it was detected at a small number of nurseries in Brisbane, Queensland.

Intensive surveillance and control measures are being carried out in New south Wales. Surveillance is also underway in Queensland to determine how widely distributed the rust may be.

Myrtle Rust is distinctive in that it produces masses of powdery bright yellow or orange-yellow spores on infected plant parts. It infects leaves of susceptible plants



Melrose Creek Bushcare Group are a happy crew with habitat management

(J & C Lister)

producing spore-filled lesions on young actively growing leaves, shoots, flower buds and fruits. Leaves may become buckled or twisted and may die as a result of infection. Sometimes these infected spots are surrounded by a purple ring. Older lesions may contain dark brown spores. Infection on highly susceptible plants may result in plant death.

Do not move or dispose of plants you think might be infected with myrtle rust— Call Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

To learn more about and to be able to identify this fungus, check web sites www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4790_17185.htm or www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust

(Extracted from sites by Charles Ivin)

A project on long-stem planting ?

Anna Bourke, in collaboration with Habitat Brisbane officer, Cath Cleary, has assisted KBCB to apply to Australian Geographic for a grant to finance a long-stem planting pilot project to support riparian work at Pony Club Bend.

Regardless of whether we are successful in obtaining this grant, there is a lot of interest in this concept. The following is mainly extracted from an Australian Plants Society Guide, 'The Long-stem Planting Guide', downloadable from their site, <http://www.australianplants.org/>. It is based mainly on the pioneering work of Bill Hicks in the Hunter Valley.

The long-stem planting method is an innovative way of planting that can result in higher survival and growth rates with minimal post-planting care. With the use of the long-stem method, seedlings are grown in pots for 10-18 months, so that they develop long woody stems. These seedlings are then planted with about

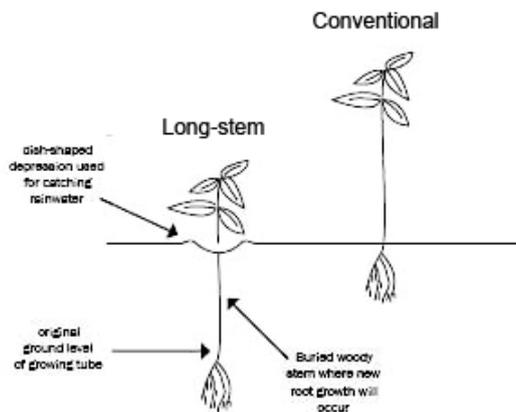
three-quarters of their length below the soil surface, approximately one metre deep, which results in much of the woody stem being covered with soil. (See the diagram below).

The deep planting protects the roots from substantial changes in soil temperature, allows the plant access to deeper soil moisture and reduces competition from weeds. Once planted, the seedling develops roots from the buried stem and leaf nodes. This promotes the development of a robust root network which gives the seedling a greater chance of survival.

Since most of the seedling's woody stem is planted underground, it is uncertain why this method of planting does not subject the stems to enhanced disease and fungal attack. Although increased planting success rates suggest this is not a problem, further research is needed to explain why.

Field trials using the long-stem method have included a variety of native species to demonstrate that seedlings can have survival and growth rates that exceed those planted using traditional planting methods. Furthermore, successful trials on river banks have been repeated under saline and also sand dune environments. Should we succeed in obtaining this grant, volunteers of Osborne Road Bushcare Group and the Tuesday Tree Liberators will pave the way to gain more understanding of this technique at Pony Club Bend later this year.

(Charles Ivin)



Difference of long-stem from conventional planting
(Australian Plants Society)

Learn that weed!



Salvinia (Salvinia molesta)

A free-floating perennial aquatic fern (and therefore with no obvious flower). Rapidly forms thick mats covering waterways and lakes.

Leaves appear waxy and bright green, are oval-shaped and about 2 cm wide. The leaf surface is covered with long, water-repellent hairs. Young leaves float flat on the water surface. As the plant matures, leaves become thick and fold at the midrib.

It develops long filamentous roots that resemble wet hairs. Trailing stems with small, hairy spore capsules form among the roots of mature plants.

Reproduces from spores and plant fragments spread by water movement, mechanical contact and water birds.

Rated the tenth most invasive plant (Score of 4.9 out of 5) in the Queensland Herbarium List of Invasive Naturalised Plants in SEQ.

A State Class 2 declared weed that requires early detection and eradication. It was sad on our recent Catchment Bus Tour to see that our BCC resources have not been sufficient to control this weed in the Nudgee Waterhole.

(CI)

Catchment Tour 2011 celebrates forests and wetlands

The International Year of Forests and World Wetlands Day was held on 2 February. Celebrating both events, KBCB in partnership with the Brisbane City Council Environment Centres organised a catchment bus tour on Sunday 30 January from 8 am to 3 pm.

The tour started in Wahminda Park adjoining Brisbane Forest Park near the headwaters of the brook. Members of the Wahminda Grove led the group through their beautiful revegetation area.

Louise Saunders and Rob Robbie hosted the presentation (and morning tea) at the bottom of the Sparkes Hill Reserve with main emphasis on the importance of flying foxes in the pollination of forests.

Volunteers and staff from the Boondall Wetland Environmental Centre provided



Group examines the pollutant trap at Cressy Street Wetland

guidance and technical information at the Cressy Street Wetlands, Wavell Heights, the Kedron Brook Wetlands/Nudgee Waterhole Reserve and finally around the Tabbil-ban dhagun walking track around the Nudgee Beach Mangrove Walk.



Kedron Brook at the Wahminda Grove area visit



Grey flying fox shown on Catchment Tour

The weather, though overcast, was cool and contributed to the pleasant, interesting day enjoyed by the group.

(Charles Ivin)

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**Flood debris near Nudgee Beach outfall
on 15 January 2011** (Robert Standish-White)

(Ferny Grove Rail Upgrade continued from page 1)

due to the close proximity of alternative feeding trees in Brisbane Forest Park'.

This ignores the large numbers of lorikeets involved, and assumes incorrectly that the existing bird species in Brisbane Forest Park are happy to share with a large group of interlopers in their own territory. It's also a bit hard for people at Ferny Grove station to enjoy gazing over the (claimed) 750 metres distance at the birds they used to see in their own nearby bushland atmosphere.

Queensland Rail wants to reduce its impact on the local environment and is presently encouraging local environmental groups (including KBCB) to propose areas for some planting of trees nearby. Anything that can reduce the harshness of bare concrete, bitumen and steel on the eye, and wildlife, would be appreciated.

(Charles Ivin)



Red-fingered Marsh Crab
(Robert Standish-White)

(State of the Brook continued from page 2)

Great Zimbabwe. We may say coal and technology put us in a different situation; I think recent weather events around the world have proved just how close we are to *not* coping!

So let's use these drastic events not to return to bad old habits but to drop them and find better ways, whether it be in house and garden design, bush remediation, effective financing, imaginative collaborations or a review of how we live and work. We hope you'll join us as we do our little bit along the Brook.

Robert Standish-White
President



**Bus Tour Group identifies a Milky Mangrove
along the track near Nudgee Beach**

Dates for your Diary:

Sunday 6 February	Bird Observation Walks - 6 February 7.00 am Cassimarty & Arbor Parks (UBD Map 117 ref D17) Contact our coordinator, Jenny Ivin, on 3851 0160 to register or to obtain more details. Check on our web site home page for any changes.
Tuesday 15 February	Kedron Brook Catchment Branch General and Network Meeting 15 February, at Downfall Creek Bushland Centre, 815 Rode Rd, McDowall. Join us at 7:00 pm for pre-meeting drinks and nibbles. Meeting runs 7:30 pm-9:30 pm. Presentation by Drs. Monika and Martin Rhodes on ecology of bats, their sonar system and survey techniques followed by a survey walk in the adjacent Reserve. RSVP Robert on 3862 1186.
Saturday 19 February	Restoring Corridors 2—Workshop 2—Ecological Restoration Sat., 19 February 8.30 am for 9.00 am start to 1 pm. Maggie Scattini presenter. Free workshop, suited for corridor property owners and bushcare site volunteers. Learn more about how to undertake ecological restoration works on your property and/or bushcare site. Places are limited, so get in quick! RSVP Anna Bourke 07 3407 0925 or email to anna.bourke@brisbane.qld.gov.au
Sunday 6 March	Clean Up Australia Day 2011 Sunday 6 March. See our web site for final details or contact our Secretary by email on enquiries@kedronbrook.org.au .



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