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Environmental Excellence celebrated!



Another successful year of Landcare was celebrated by over 80 volunteers and their supporters on Friday 29 November 2024 at the Landcare & Sustainable Living Centre, umali barai-ku.

To begin the celebrations, Mayor Adam Shultz welcomed attendees and acknowledged the impressive efforts of volunteers in 2024. This was followed by the presentation of the Lake Macquarie Environmental Excellence in Landcare (EEL) Awards. The EEL Awards provide an opportunity to promote and celebrate the wonderful achievements of Landcare volunteers throughout the year and to applaud the remarkable dedication of our long-term volunteers who have reached impressive milestones.

Mackenzie Robson (representing Federal Member Dan Repacholi) presented the newcomers group award, long-standing group award, and the silent strength award, Cr Christine Buckley presented the Landcare achievers and local legend awards, Deputy Mayor Cr Antcliff presented the 10 and 20 years' service awards and Jodie Harrison MP presented the Carl Fulton memorial community education award and the John Hughson 'Soaring with the Eagles' award.

The 'Soaring with the Eagles' award recognises a Landcarer who has made a regionally significant contribution to environmental excellence in Landcare. This year, this highly esteemed award was won by Carmel Brown (pictured above with MP Jodie Harrison). Carmel is a dedicated Team Leader of Catherine Hill Bay Dunecare and member of the Hunter Region Landcare Network committee. Her valuable contribution over the last 10 years spans all levels of involvement, from her work within her own group to her wider involvement locally and within our region.

Following the award ceremony, guests enjoyed the chance to relax and catch up with fellow Landcarers over some nibbles and trivia.

For the full list of award winners please see Page 2.

2024 Environmental Excellence in Landcare Awardees

Newcomers Group Award

- Whitebridge Balireh Landcare
- Luprena Close Landcare
- Friends of Munibung Hill Landcare
- John Fisher Road Landcare

Long Standing Group Award

- Dora Creek Landcare
- Lake Petite Landcare

Silent Strength Award

- Helen Thompson - Nursery team
- Tom Parrish - Green Team
- Dean Robertson - Green Team

Landcare Achievers

- Lee Rogers of Dora Creek Landcare
- Robert Spargo of Kenibea Bushland Reserve Landcare
- Ruby Walker of Toronto Greenway Landcare
- David Pickard of Lake Petite Landcare
- Steve Robinson of Short Street Landcare
- Heather Carter of Lucilla Ridge Landcare
- Nichole Haigh of Coal Point Progress Association Landcare

• Helen Thompson of Dobell Drive, Toronto Greenway & Wangi Clifftop Landcare sites

• Karen Burge of Lake Petite Landcare

Local Legend Award

• Julia Stenton of Deaves Road and Dora Creek Landcare

• Isabel Garde of Kooroora Bay Landcare

• Hugh Robertson of Green Point Foreshore Reserve Landcare

• Jayne Gordon of Catherine Hill Bay Landcare

• Wendy Heys of Catherine Hill Bay Landcare

• Dennis Archibald of Stobbart Creek Landcare

• Vina Chubb of Biddabah Creek Landcare

• Pamela Sharp of Coal Point Progress Association Landcare

• Roslyn Cornish of Coal Point Progress Association Landcare

• Kathy Gall of Coal Point Progress Association Landcare

10 Years' Service Award

• Jenny McGrath of Afton Close Landcare

• Craig Whitford of Warners Bay

Landcare

• Andrew Brock of Tathra Landcare

• Wendy Davidson of Coal Point Progress Association Landcare and Keith Barry Oval Landcare

• Clare Shiels of Dobell Drive Landcare

20 Years' Service Award

• Robert Gibson of Flaggy Creek Landcare

• Robert Montgomery of Myuna Bay Landcare

• Pam Montgomery of Myuna Bay Landcare

• Dennis Archibald of Stobbart Creek Landcare

• Robyn Sheldon of Stobbart Creek Landcare

• Stephen Sheldon of Stobbart Creek Landcare

Carl Fulton Memorial Community Education Award

• Jennifer Rosewood of Middle Point Road Landcare

• Sharyn Coleman of Wyee Point Reserve Landcare

John Hughson 'Soaring with the Eagles' Award

Carmel Brown of Catherine Hill Bay

2025 LMLVN Committee

The Lake Macquarie Landcare Volunteer Network (LMLVN) held their Annual General Meeting on the 29 November, electing the following Committee positions for 2025:

Chairperson: Marion Lugg

Deputy Chairperson: Lois Simpson

Secretary: Wendy Davidson

Treasurer: Julia Stenton

General Committee Members: Pam Montgomery, Nancy Lott, Winsome Lambkin, Don Roach and Rosalynd O'Shannassy.



The Network meets for a few hours on the second Tuesday of each month. Landcarers are welcome to attend these meetings. Contact the Landcare office on 4921 0392 or lro@lakemac.nsw.gov.au for further information.

Another season of Landcaring



By Simon Lubinski, Acting Landcare Coordinator

Another year of Landcaring has been and gone. With the temperature rising and the humidity hitting the roof, it's time to sit back for a while and take stock of another busy, productive and fulfilling year.

neighbours, including those from Hunter Region Landcare Network.

The Landcare Office and the LMLVN joined together for the Living Smart festival and put together a lovely display. The day was enjoyable, informative and there have even been a Landcarer or two snagged for our cause. Landcare needs YOU!

Around the traps, we've spotted lizards, rodents, snakes, koalas, echidnas, birds, insects, ticks and leeches. What a haul! I wonder if we're breeding a special kind of tick that is attracted to Landcare fluoro?

To round off the year, the EEL Awards were held at the end of November. It was a fantastic evening with Landcarers and elected representatives crammed in to hand out some gongs to some very deserving volunteers. There was great food, conversation with people that really understood Landcaring, and a trivia quiz that had a few people stumped. It was an opportunity to say thanks, have a laugh and a bite to eat.

Lastly, thank you to all the volunteers who give their time, week in, week out to help make a difference to our natural environment. I know the Landcare staff love supporting our volunteers and hearing about their wins, challenges and ideas for site management. It takes a special kind of person (suckers for punishment maybe?) to be a Landcarer. We're not like other people. We care, we give our time and all for the greater good. Thank you for caring. Thank you for your work. And I hope you can have a nice break, relax, reflect, and come back to give those weeds hell.

Landcare volunteers across the Lake have combined to carry out an enormous amount of work. We got the blue sheets out, found the calculator and got to counting. Landcarers have managed over 13,000 hours of volunteer work on sites and in the nursery. And that's what we counted from all you good people returning your diaries. I can guess the real number is quite a bit higher. But even at that conservative estimate, that's a lot of bush regeneration.

Over 13 Hectares of weeding occurred in our natural areas. That is a big contribution. When you consider a lot of the weeds removed and treated are horrors like Ground Asparagus, Turkey Rhubarb and Madeira Vine, that is an outstanding effort. It is also allowing bushland to regenerate naturally and giving native species a chance. That means less effort and costs in native plants that need to be replanted. Brilliant.

Our Nursery volunteers had a bumper year, pushing out over 60,000 plants. That's a phenomenal effort. The majority of those plants went to large scale replanting projects carried out in and around natural areas in Lake Macquarie. All from local seed and propagules. What an achievement.

The Landcare and Sustainable Living Centre, umali barai-ku, was host to some amazing and informative workshops and events over the year. In conjunction with the LMLVN and other Council Departments, we were able to host Eucalypt and Grass ID workshops out of the centre. Landcarers were also invited to learn about Myrtle Rust and it's impacts on local tree species, Rats Bats and Pythons, the importance of Mistletoes in the natural environment, Weed Detection Dogs, Belmont Birds and Tiny Forests. For our Landcare Week Celebrations, a bus tour of three Landcare sites was arranged. Landcarers from outside the area were invited to attend. It was a brilliant day where Lake Macquarie Landcarers were able to show off their patch, and trade information with our



Annual report from LMLVN Chair

Thank you to Marion Lugg for the following summary of her Annual Report for the 2024 AGM of the Lake Macquarie Landcare Volunteer Network Inc.

As Chair, I'm reporting on the activities of the Network, in particular those carried out by the committee over the past year, that have helped to keep the Network functioning well and happily in pursuit of its goals.

Completed governance matters:

- We needed to appoint a new Public Officer at the very start of the year, after Garry Stewart sadly passed away, and Julia Stenton put her hand up to take on the position. Thank you Julia!
- We created a new email address for the Network in order to provide for direct correspondence to and from the committee. It coexists with the one on Council's email system, which continues to be the main one used for the Network's administrative matters.
- We held six Team Leader information sessions, in March, April and July, primarily to set up the means for adding Network members' contact details to the membership register. Team Leaders from 48 groups attended over the 6 sessions, and more got in touch separately. As of now, members from more than 60 groups are on our register. A very valuable side benefit of these sessions were more general information sharing, networking and socialising opportunities between TL's and with staff.
- We applied to register as a charity, due to changes in ATO reporting requirements. Just before the end of the year we were advised that our charity status was approved.

Completed activities to enable, promote and support Landcare activity to improve our natural environment:

- Two grant projects were completed during the first half of the year - Myuna Bay's Eraring Community Investment Fund grant for professional on ground support with Bush regeneration, and Kenibea's Community Environment Grant, to install and monitor nest boxes including community education.
- We accepted four invitations to speak about Landcare from various garden, Rotary and Probus clubs.
- Stalls: Two were held in 2024, in Morisset in March and at the Living Smart Festival in September, both

well staffed by our members. 7 and 9 people respectively filled in forms to volunteer, and lots of people learnt more about Landcare and garden escapes!

- Events: There have been many and their value to all who attend is always obvious! First, our Super Saturday Sessions which Winsome has reported excellent outcomes from. Also, celebrating volunteering in National Volunteer Week in May; the Bus Trip during Landcare Week in August, which brought 53 mostly Landcarers together for the day (with Landcarers from Port Stephens, Upper Hunter, Maitland, and Newcastle, thanks to collaboration with HRLN). Then in October and November, two first class workshops on eucalypts and on grasses, so popular there were waiting lists. And the EEL Awards and end of year celebration turned out to be so popular, the books were closed early, and we are wondering about another venue for 2025!! In all of these events, staff and volunteers have worked closely together, exemplifying the partnership, called Lake Macquarie Landcare, that has been so successful year after year.
- Our wonderful staff entered the Network into the 2023/2024 State and Territory Landcare Awards, and their glowing description of our achievements through partnership, won us the NSW Community Partnership Award. In June, four of us travelled down to Sydney to accept the award and to enjoy a memorable evening. We're now finalists in the National Awards, so we'll be attending the National Landcare Conference on the Gold Coast in September 2025.

Other plans for 2025 include:

- Four more SSSs, thanks to Winsome;
- More work on completing the membership register;
- A project to research and compile historical information from early Landcarers here in Lake Macquarie about the origins and early days of the network;
- Updating our constitution.

I'd like to thank everyone who has served on the committee in 2024. And I'd like to thank the staff who support us in all manner of different ways.

Beat the heat this summer



With more hot days forecast it is important that Landcarers know the risks of heat related illness and plan ahead to avoid Landcare activities in hot conditions.

Beat the heat this summer by following these easy steps:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Have a plan for how to stay cool when it heats up.
- Check on elderly friends, neighbours and relatives.
- Keep cool, do less and avoid being out in the hottest part of the day.

Know the early signs of heat related illness:

- Dizziness, fainting
- Tiredness
- Thirst
- Bright or dark yellow urine

Take steps to prevent it reaching dangerous levels. Move somewhere cool and drink water. If you start to feel unwell, seek medical advice.

Learn more about how to beat the heat this summer at <https://bit.ly/BeatTheHeatinNSW>

Remember your Landcare site needs a rest in hot weather too as removing weeds may expose native plants to more heat impacts and herbicide is often ineffective over a certain temperature. Any planting is best left until Autumn.

New video about the LMLVN inc.



In this new video, LMLVN Chair, Marion Lugg, explains the details of the Lake Macquarie Landcare partnership and the role the LMLVN Committee plays. By becoming a committee member, you can help shape Landcare initiatives and ensure the continued success of the partnership that is Lake Macquarie Landcare. All Landcare volunteers are invited to attend committee meetings. The Committee meets for a few hours on the second Tuesday of each month from 1pm.

Visit our Youtube Channel www.youtube.com/LakeMacLandcare to watch videos on a range of

Landcare topics including the LMLVN committee video (pictured above)

If you have suggestions for videos, or would like a video made of your Landcare site, please contact us at lro@lakemac.nsw.gov.au.

Landcare groups seeking members

The following groups would like to attract new volunteers. If you would like to advertise or update your group's details on this page and our website, please contact us on 4921 0392.

The groups have been organised under wards and suburbs to make them easier to locate, especially for those wishing to volunteer close to home (see map at right of wards in Lake Macquarie).



West Ward Groups

Suburb	Group	Meeting Time	Contact Details
Bolton Point	Awaba Bay Landcare	1st Sun of each month, 9am-12noon, The Ridgeway between Bolton Cl & Fulton Cl	LML 4921 0392
Carey Bay/ Coal Point	Coal Point Progress Association Landcare	Every Thursday 8am-12:30pm	LML 4921 0392
Dora Creek	Dora Creek Landcare	Minnie Street or Boat Ramp - every Tuesday 9am – noon at one or the other	LML 4921 0392
Eraring	Eraring Landcare	Variable	LML 4921 0392
Fennell Bay/ Bolton Point	Kooroora Bay Landcare	8.30-11.30am, every 2nd Wednesday of the month (please call to confirm)	LML 4921 0392
Holmesville	West Wallsend District Landcare	3rd Sun of the month from 8am or 9am, Western end of Elizabeth St. Holmesville	Paul Lindsay – Secretary, WWDSNG 4953 2252
Mirrabooka	Dandaraga Road - Fishery Point Landcare	1st Thursday or 3rd Saturday of each month.	Email Wilma on wilvk123@gmail.com or call LML 4921 0392
Morisset	Lakeside Retirement Village Landcare	Varies - several times a month	LML 4921 0392
Morisset Park	Lake Petite	Varies	LML 4921 0392
Sunshine	Sunshine-Silverwater Landcare	1st Saturday & 3rd Thursday mornings of each month	LML 4921 0392 or email Marion melugg2@gmail.com
Toronto	Toronto Lions Park	2nd Friday of the month, 8-10am	LML 4921 0392
Toronto	Toronto Greenway Landcare	Every Sat from 8am.	LML 4921 0392
Wangi Wangi	Dobell Drive Reserve Landcare	2nd Sun of the month 8am –10am	LML 4921 0392
Wangi Wangi	Myuna Bay Landcare	2nd Fri of the month, 9am – 12noon.	LML 4921 0392 or email rmontgomery962@gmail.com
Wangi Wangi	Wangi Ridge Preservation Board Landcare	Sun, 8-10am, meet at water tank at Cres Rd	LML 4921 0392
Wyee Point	Wyee Point Reserve Landcare	Varies - see Wyee Point Reserve Landcare Facebook page	LML 4921 0392

North Ward Groups

Suburb	Group Name	Meeting Time	Contact Details
Cardiff	Afton Close Landcare	2nd & 4th Sat of month 9-12, end of Close	LML 4921 0392
Charlestown	Flaggy Creek Landcare	2nd Sat of the month, 8am, meet at corner of Kaleen & Wakal Sts	Robert Gibson 4943 7486
Highfields	Highfields Landcare	Variable	LML 4921 0392
Kahibah	Kenibea Landcare	Variable	LML 4921 0392
Kotara South	Tathra Landcare	Variable Sundays 8-10am. Meet at end of Neerim Ave	LML 4921 0392
Lakelands	Biddabah Creek Landcare	Every Monday 8:30am	Vina 0437 492 387
Macquarie Hills	Torrens Avenue Landcare	Varies	LML 4921 0392
Mount Hutton	Mount Hutton Landcare	Fridays, from 8:30am	LML 4921 0392
Rankin Park	Central Rankin Park Landcare	Wednesdays, Sundays	LML 4921 0392
Whitebridge	Fernleigh Track Whitebridge	1st Sat and 3rd Fri of month, 8 -11am. Fernleigh track rest area, entry from Paterson Close, Whitebridge.	LML 4921 0392
Whitebridge	Whitebridge Balireh	Varies	LML 4921 0392

East Ward Groups

Suburb	Group Name	Meeting Time	Contact Details
Belmont	John Fisher Road	Varies	LML 4921 0392
Blacksmiths	Blacksmiths Marks Point Pelican Sustainable Landcare group	Varies, usually meet Tues 8:30am Grannies Pool Carpark	Greg 49714808
Catherine Hill Bay	Catherine Hill Bay Landcare	First Mon of the month, 3-5pm at Carpark at Graveyard Beach	Carmel Brown 0438 499 636
Eleebana	Stobbart Creek Landcare	Every three weeks, 8:30-10am	LML 4921 0392
Floraville	Floraville Ridge & Rainforest Reserve	Variable	Winsome 0431 968 315
Jewells	Ballantrae to Halewood	Varies	LML 4921 0392
Valentine	Allambee Gardens Reserve Landcare	Last Sun of month 2-4pm	LML 4921 0392
Valentine	Green Point Foreshore Reserve Landcare	Every Wed 8-11am	LML 4921 0392
Warners Bay/ Eleebana/ Lakelands	Warners Bay Landcare	Usually 1st Sun, 2nd Thurs and 3rd Fri of the month, 9am-12noon	LML 4921 0392

*** Have your group details changed? Please contact Lake Macquarie Landcare on 4921 0392 to update ***

Grass Identification Workshop

Twenty-five Landcare volunteers, support staff, and community members attended a grass identification workshop in November, led by the renowned Grass Guru, Harry Rose. This event was made possible by the support of Lake Macquarie City Council and Local Land Services.

Harry guided the group through the process of identifying a variety of local introduced and native grasses, highlighting their key features. He also provided a comprehensive guide on using his book for identifying coastal grasses. Among the many insightful tips Harry shared, he explained how to distinguish between the two local species of *Echinopogon*: *E. caespitosus*, which has a larger seed head and straight leaves, and *E. ovatus*, which features a smaller seed head and twisted leaves.

Harry is an excellent teacher with a wealth of knowledge.

If you missed out on this workshop, keep your eyes on our communications for another in early 2025.



Correction to Gum Identification Workshop article in last Urban Landcarer

Our Nov/Dec 2024 Urban Landcarer article 'Gum trees with the Great Gadsby' incorrectly referred to Paul Gadsby as a former TAFE teacher. Paul is actually a current TAFE teacher at both Ryde and Wentworth Falls TAFEs in Conservation and Ecosystem Management.

Green Team assistance

The Green Team are taking a well earned summer break, returning Monday 27 January 2025.

Team Leaders are encouraged to request support days in the coming months. Each Landcare group can be supported with two Green Team visits per financial year. However, active groups who submit their work diaries can apply for further assistance. If there is room in the calendar once the first round of entitlements are filled, we will consider providing additional support.

Please contact Landcare staff on Iro@lakemac.nsw.gov.au or 4921 0392 to book your friendly Green Team visit.



Fridays in the Field/ Friday Focus on Facebook

Follow us on Facebook to see our regular segments 'Fridays in the Field' and 'Friday Focus' with Landcare staff. Here are some snippets from recent weeks.

15 November with Simon

This week I visited some Landcare sites in eastern Lake Macquarie that we will be including in a grant application for professional weeding support. These sites are high profile areas on Crown Land and have dedicated Landcare groups tackling Weeds of National Significance like Lantana, Bitou, Madeira Vine, Ground Asparagus and environmental weeds like Morning Glory and Turkey Rhubarb. They also have some great native vegetation and community values that some extra weeding assistance will help protect.

If your Landcare group would like any assistance in obtaining extra support for weeding efforts please get in touch with us at the Landcare office. We can look at available funding options and the needs of the site with you to see what we can do to help. Sites are much more likely to receive funding where there are groups that are actively assisting with maintenance weeding so we really appreciate the efforts of all of our volunteers.



8 November with Glenn

With the previous days of rain behind us, the Green Team ventured to St Marys High School at Gateshead to join some Year 10 students, who are doing a fantastic job of regenerating Kennedy Creek that runs behind the school grounds. The students, who are taking classes in sustainability, were given a talk by our Landcare Support Officer, Wendy, regarding the weed Turkey Rhubarb *Rumex sagittatus*. She explained how it grows, the conditions it likes, how to treat it, and finally, how fauna biodiversity can be improved by its removal. The students then walked the site, looking for where it had sprung up, aiming to locate the weed at its furthest point upstream, as it can easily spread not only by wind but also by water.



25 October by Amy

The Green Team had the chance to spend a beautiful morning at Shoreside Row Murrays Beach Landcare. This place is magical. The birds were singing the entire morning. The lake was stunning and the view at morning tea was serene. While the birds fought each other for hollow space in the trees, we fought Asparagus Fern and Buffalo Grass on the ground. Team leader, Jamie, shared a photo of two Scaly-breasted Lorikeets nesting in a hollow about 1 meter off the ground. Another interesting find near the Landcare site is the side-by-side growth of two different tree types, each with a similar growth pattern. The smooth bark tree is a Forest Redgum *Eucalyptus tereticornis*. The Ironbark species was not identified. It is potentially Broad-leaved Red Ironbark *Eucalyptus fibrosa*. This tree ID would be good practice for those looking to improve their Eucalypt identification skills.

Wye Point Reserve Landcare Lantana efforts

Check out these great progress photos shared by Wye Point Reserve Landcare. The photo on the left shows the Green Team assisting the group in January 2024 and the photo on the right shows how the Lantana has been pushed back by the group's weeding efforts and native plants revealed in October 2024. Sharyn, the group's Team Leader says "Sometimes it takes a bit of time to realise the progress you've made. With the help of the Lake Macquarie Landcare Green Team in January we managed to tackle a great wall of Lantana. Now the bush has begun to come back." You can see more of the group's achievements on their [Wye Point Reserve Landcare Facebook Page](#).



Follow Lake Macquarie Landcare on Facebook

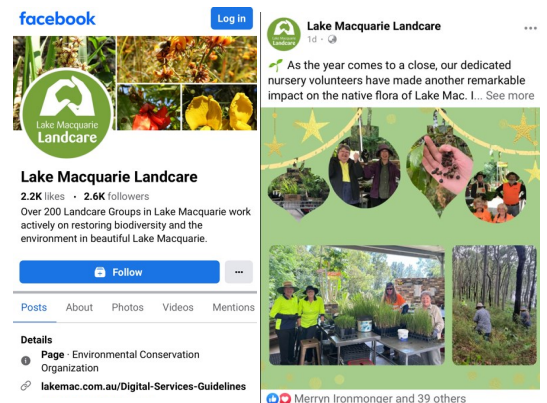
Join over 2500 people who follow Lake Macquarie Landcare on Facebook!

See all the latest news, Landcare sightings, videos and lots more.

Send us messages and show your fellow Landcarers your support through comments.

A great way to stay connected!

Visit www.facebook.com/LakeMacLandcare



Plan ahead for Autumn 2025 plantings

Now is a great time to place your plant orders and give the nursery enough time to prepare them for the next planting season.

Growing plants for distribution from the Landcare nursery can take up to 6 months (for the plants that we have seed stock of).

You can order a set number of plants with staged pick up, dates/months in line with working bees.

We can help you choose the plants to suit your site. If you have specific species of plants in mind, ordering in advance will increase the likelihood of supply.



Plants flourishing at Hillsborough Public School

Local plants are flourishing in a new garden at Hillsborough Public School! The photos at right show the range of new species one year after planting, including *Westringia fruticosa*, *Melaleuca thymifolia* and *Callistemon pinifolius* now providing increased biodiversity and cooling benefits to the school grounds.

Landcare in schools is supported through Lake Macquarie City Council's Junior Landcare Program. For more information on the Lake Macquarie Junior Landcare Program, or to get involved, please contact Lake Macquarie Landcare on 4921 0392. Schools can apply for free plants for a school planting by completing the Landcare in Schools Plant Request Form available from our website.

Our website also has a Landcare Factsheet on tips for establishing a school garden. Visit www.lakemacquarielandcare.org.au for further information.



Ticks and their removal

Many of our volunteers have encountered an increase in ticks on Landcare sites over the past few weeks. Warmer conditions have meant that these insects have become more prevalent.

The best way to prevent tick bites is to avoid tick-infested areas. If this is not possible, wear the appropriate PPE including long sleeves and pants. It is a good idea to tuck long pants into socks, and wear light coloured clothing to make it easier to see ticks on clothes before they attach to the skin.

Before entering possible tick infested environments apply an insect repellent to your clothes and/or skin. The repellent should be applied and re-applied according to the manufacturer's instructions. Clothing treated with permethrin is also recommended.

It is important to check all areas of your body thoroughly for ticks after working on your Landcare site. If you discover any ticks, the recommended method of removal is freezing them by applying a product containing ether. For more details regarding tick prevention and their safe removal, please refer to our website.

Please note tick bites or infestations on your daily diaries (blue sheets) and report any serious reactions to the Landcare staff as soon as possible on 4921 0392.



Bio-controls and Landcare

By Acting Landcare Coordinator
Simon Lubinski

Landcaring can be rough. You turn up to your site, filled with enthusiasm and energy but are faced with a whole lot of weeds!

Landcarer's learn to look at a site with different eyes. Weeds aren't just weeds. They're habitat, they're a food source, they're structure, they're a border holding out other weeds. This is all true, but it's still a tough gig. Sometimes, we'd love to know, isn't there a better way? Surely something else can do the work? Surely!

Well what about bio-controls? We'll release some bugs and they'll do the work. Sounds great! So let's have a look at some of them.

Cactus Moth

The Cactus Moth *Cactoblastis cactorum* is the poster child of successful bio-controls. In 1926, the Moth was released to attack Prickly Pear, a nasty Cactus taking over 24 million Ha cropping and grazing lands in NSW and Queensland. The Moth laid its eggs on the Cactus with the hatched larvae eating the fleshy leaves from the inside out. The release was so successful that by 1933 most of the Prickly Pear had been eradicated.

Salvinia Weevil

Salvinia is a rampant water weed that left unchecked can choke waterways. The Salvinia Weevil *Cyrtobagous salviniae* feeds on the invasive weed helping to control infestation. Muddy Lake near Dora Creek is an area where there has been a recent release of the Salvinia Weevil to help treat a significant outbreak. Several releases were carried out in a short amount of time. Weevil numbers eventually grew to a large enough

number to begin controlling the infestation. There is still Salvinia in the Lake, however at a much reduced level. The Salvinia Weevils have survived over winter and are keeping the Salvinia to a manageable level.

Bridal Creeper Leaf Hopper

The Bridal Creeper Leaf Hopper *Zygina spp* was first released in Australia in 1999. The Leaf Hopper damages leaves of the Bridal Creeper plant by piercing plant cells and sucking out all the cell contents. Leaves are left completely white with a good sized population of leaf hoppers. The insect has been shown to be very successful at controlling large infestations.

Trad Smut

One of the most recent releases, the Trad Smut fungus *Kordyana brasiliensis* has been shown to be very successful at tackling Trad. Some releases have been more successful than others, and winter temperatures seem to slow the spread significantly. The fungal spores spread via wind and water, so more open sites show a quicker spread. The fungus quickly defoliates the runners and the stems die quickly.

Cats Claw Creeper Jewel Beetle

Not all biological controls work well in our climate. Cat's Claw Creeper is an invasive weed that can smother trees and shrubs. The Cat's Claw Creeper Jewel Beetle *Hedwigiella jureceki* attacks the leaves of the Cat's Claw Creeper vine, reducing the creeper's vigour. Adults chew holes in the leaves, while larvae mine within them. So far, releases in the Lake Macquarie area have not been very successful, and with release sites showing little sign of damage.

Madeira Vine Beetle

If you have Madeira Vine onsite, you know what a horrible weed it is.



When the Madeira Vine Beetle *Plectonocha correntina* became available for release, hopes were high. However, despite numerous releases at a large number of sites around Lake Macquarie, the results have been disappointing. The beetles have been unable to make a significant impact on the weed, so unfortunately, it's back to manual and chemical controls. Research continues in the area, so we're hoping for another bio-control in the near future.

When weighing up whether to use bio-controls onsite, there are a number of considerations:

Great things about bio-controls

1. Chemical free!
2. Works outside of normal business hours.
3. Very cheap.
4. Can be very effective.

Not so great things about bio-controls

1. Generally need a large size infestation to support a growing population. Small infestations are often not enough to support a viable bio-control population.
2. Seasonal: Like weed growth, bio-control numbers ebb and flow with the seasons. A lot of our bio-

controls (and weeds) come from warmer areas of the world. Cold winters can often impact a population.

3. Bio-controls need weeds to live: well, yeah, obviously. The problem is, once weed density diminishes, many bio-controls will start to die out. Once the weeds start to flourish again, bio-control numbers increase. There's a time-lag between weed growth and bio-control increase.

4. Too successful: just imagine, a bio-control that works too well! The problem here is a smothering weed, like Trad, prevents other weeds from germinating. Once that weed is killed, it opens up a large area to allow new weeds to germinate. It's why we ask Landcarers to clear small areas gradually. Sometimes we're just swapping one weed for a whole host of others.

So, bio-controls are a mixed bag. Some work really well, some not as well as others. It's important to understand that a bio-control is a tool in a broader strategy. A bio-control can be an important part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) solution. When you use a bio-control to help stop the spread of a weed, and then follow up with a combination of manual removal, cultural controls and chemical application, weeds can be successfully controlled. Depending on only one method can often be unsuccessful, or unachievable. Talk to your Landcare Support Officer about options for your site. And we'll keep you in the loop about what's coming up in the world of bio-controls.

A walk up Munibung Hill

By Marion Lugg, LMLVN Chair

Munibung Hill rises from several different suburbs, and three Landcare sites are on or at the base of it. After visiting one of them recently, I realised I'd found a manageable route up the hill, and went back a couple of weeks later to make the climb, something I've wanted to do for years.

As I walked through the Lucilla Ridge Landcare site, I was quite thrilled to see three clumps of what I think was Long-flowered Mistletoe *Dendrophthoe vitellina*, a native that favours open eucalypt forests. I haven't seen native Mistletoe growing in its natural habitat before! What a find! Its fallen flowers alerted me to its presence.

Quite apart from the views, which are spectacular, there were many other delights on my way to the top. Turpentine *Syncarpia glomulifera* were a surprise as the walk became more exposed, since they are more typically found near rainforest or wet sclerophyll forest. But the standout for me was finding several Bottlebrush Grass Trees *Xanthorrhoea macronema*, including this one still partly in bud at the top of the hill. The Bottlebrush Grass Tree is not rare, but it's not exactly common either, so seeing half a dozen on my way to the top was definitely unexpected.

It was so disappointing to find this unusual mix of native vegetation marred by heavy infestations of invasive weeds! Two in particular - Pampas Grass *Cortaderia selloana* and Formosa Lily *Lilium formosanum* - are a serious problem and out of control. These weeds can find their way uphill because they have light, wind-borne seeds and these two fit that description perfectly.

Sadly, there appears to be very limited weed management, and I wondered what was possible on such steep slopes and especially the cliff overhang where Pampas Grass infestations had become established. Three Landcare sites hug the base of the hill, but none are higher up, and most of the higher areas wouldn't be feasible for even the keenest Landcarer!

I later discovered that Council has an overall Management Plan for Munibung Hill, finalised in March 2022, after I'd been told that work has in fact been started on the Pampas Grass there, and more work is planned. I also read recently that a drone is being used to treat Pampas Grass in the Hunter Wetlands. What a great idea if it could be used here!



Above: Bottlebrush Grass Tree.
Below: Long-flowered Mistletoe.



Native of the Moment: Bush Cherry

Scientific name: *Exocarpos cupressiformis*

Note, the name *Exocarpos* comes from the Greek *exo*, meaning outside and *carpos*, a fruit, referring to the apparent location of the seed outside of the fruit. The name *cupressiformis* was chosen due to the similarity in appearance to the conifer *Cupressus*.

Common names: Bush Cherry, Cherry Ballart

This festive looking tree is important for a range of fauna, not only as a food source but also as a cool resting place/ roost tree. The importance of these trees for Koalas, especially in hot weather is noted in an interesting article at www.koalacancyfoundation.org.au/the-importance-of-cherry-ballarts-to-koalas/

These plants are hemiparasitic (meaning they can photosynthesise but gain extra nutrients through attaching to the roots of other trees). Being so specialised and integrated in their environment they are difficult to propagate and use in revegetation and the article above emphasises the importance of protecting forests where they occur as vital for conserving fauna that utilise them like koalas.



Above: Native Cherry (Photo by Simon Lubinski)

Description: Shrub or small tree to 8 m high that looks like a conifer with weeping foliage of yellowish-green to dark green colour. The very small cream flowers occur throughout the year but mainly in October–May and are followed by the fruit which is a small nut about 0.5 cm in diameter. The nut is attached to a fleshy fruit-like structure which is actually an enlarged, succulent section of the flower stalk. This is usually bright red and is edible but tastes bitter.

Distribution: Grows in a variety of soils from the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland to southern Tasmania, and across to the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia

Landcare shirts and hats

The Lake Macquarie Landcare Volunteer Network has Landcare shirts and hats available to purchase. Shirts are \$35, available in sizes: S, M, L, XL, and XXL. Hats are priced at \$22, in sizes 57cm, 59cm, and 61cm.

If you would like to purchase, you can drop into the Landcare office, or contact us on 4921 0392 or email lro@lakemac.nsw.gov.au to coordinate a suitable pick-up time. Cash payments only for shirts and hat purchases.

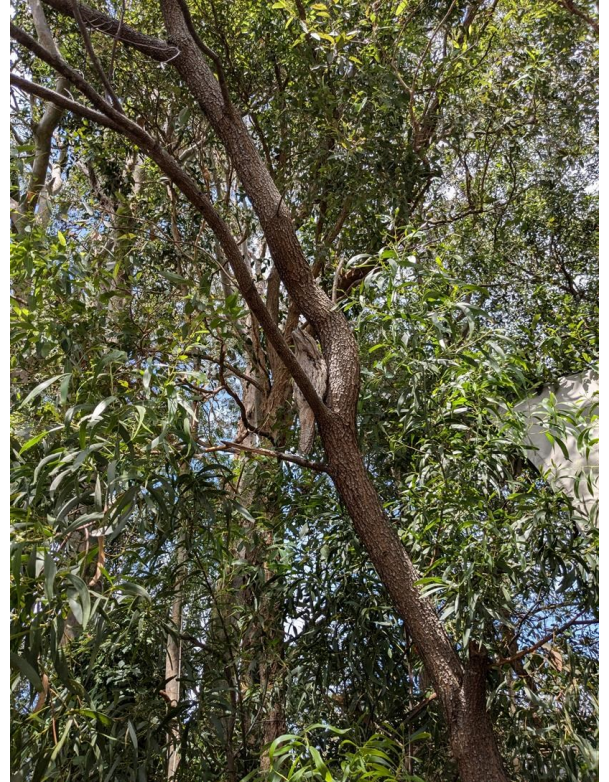


Landcare sightings!

Check out these pictures contributed by Lake Macquarie Landcare volunteers and staff in recent months. Please keep sending in your photos and snippets for our newsletters, website and Facebook page.



Above: White-headed Pigeon at Kenibea Bushland Reserve (Photo by Bob Spargo).



Above: Tawny Frogmouth (Photo by Pam Sharp of Coal Point Progress Association Landcare)



Above: Black Prince Cicada Lomandra at Dobell Drive Landcare by Helen Thompson

Right: Orange Assassin Bug (*Gminatulus australis*) photo by Rosalind Halton of the Green Team



Plant sales from the Landcare nursery

Local tubestock for home gardens can be purchased from the Landcare nursery on Tuesdays and Wednesdays 8:30am - 3:30pm or by appointment.

Plants available for sales are also listed and described on our website www.lakemacquarielandcare.org.au

Please call us on 4921 0392 for plant sales enquiries. Discounts are available for Landcare volunteers and Backyard Habitat for Wildlife Members – the discounted tubestock rate is currently \$4.65 per forestry tube. EFTPOS purchases only.



Would you like to contribute to our newsletters?

Perhaps you would like to promote a successful project, showcase what your group is up to or just share something interesting happening on your site. Please send your stories and photos to Kate Meares via email lro@lakemac.nsw.gov.au or post to **PO Box 97 Toronto NSW 2283**. Call Kate with any questions on 4921 0392. Deadline for articles for the next newsletter (Mar/Apr Urban Landcarer) is 12 February 2025.

Thank you to all the Landcarers who contributed stories, photos and information for this newsletter.

Please circulate this publication within your group or share it with your neighbours.

This publication (and much more) is available online www.lakemacquarielandcare.org.au

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The opinions and views expressed within this newsletter are not necessarily those of Lake Macquarie Landcare Volunteer Network or Lake Macquarie City Council



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Lake Macquarie Landcare is proudly supported by Lake Macquarie City Council