

Diary

Eurong Working Bee

15th to 22nd July, 2017



July Weedbusters Team at Bowarrady Creek

Summary

- The Group contributed **360 hours** of voluntary work during the week
- The nursery was extended with FIDO's contribution of almost \$1,000 of material;
- The nursery was cleared out and all of the pots and tubes weeded; cuttings from 14 species were potted up and the seeds of 11 species were collected; 168 seedlings or wildings were potted into tubes or 140 mm pots
- 60 plants were taken from the nursery and planted. It would have been more if approval had been given for planting up the Happy Valley dump area and if it had been earlier in the year when there is more predictable rain.
- The demonstration gardens at the resort were covered with woodchip;
- Big inroads were made into the weeds of the most infested areas in front of Residential Valley and between that and the Resort particularly with Basket Asparagus removal.
- A bad infestation of a cocktail of weeds outside the dingo fence were sprayed

Saturday 15th July

There was a large team of 12 for this working group. All had previously worked at Eurong at least once but most many more times. To accommodate the larger than usual party two houses were rented and the group enjoyed the generous support of the Kingfisher Group.

Roger set off from Maroochydore via Mt Coolum where he collected Suzanne. It was just as well he had plenty of room in his ute because Suzanne had scrubbed out and loaded hundreds of pots for the nursery along with two large bags of perlite. They arrived at Mary River Heads at 12.00 Noon just minutes after the Fearless Leader. F.L. and his load of Su, Gray and Ross had set off from Norman Park at 7.15 but made a deviation to explore the environs of the proposed Colton Coal mine after Gray had revealed a previously unknown chapter of his life as a geologist. The choice of ferries was dedicated by the support that Kingfisher offers to FIDO working bees providing this free service, not matched by anyone else. It was an express run from Kingfisher to Eurong on a very firm track and they arrived at 2.30 and immediately began a site inspection while waiting for the other party proceeding via the Inskip Point - Hook Point ferry.

Meanwhile the trusty troops had set off from the Gold Coast early collected TAHKA in Brisbane and Maree in Tin Can Bay along with fresh victuals. The tide slowed their advance and caused them to take the old mining road. On their arrival at Eurong there were many joyous reunions and the stage was set for the morrow's work. Su presented Suzanne with *"The Order of the Golden Trowel"* which was a trowel seemingly designed for nursery work and for pricking out seedlings and weeds.



Greenhood ground orchids Eurong

Sunday 16th July

The three working groups had been mapped out. The Nursery group of Suzanne, Greg, Mike, Roger and F. L. had as their priority task extending the nursery bench space. With all of the materials on site and with amazingly cooperative team-work this was accomplished by smoko. Not only that but they had established a number of pandanus in improved germination boxes and Suzanne

had weeded though the whole assemblage in the lower shade house. The QPWS had played a significant role by placing palettes under the existing benches which is helping to suppress weeds and increase the capacity of the nursery.

After smoko, F.L. and Roger went to work on the storage shed to increase its capacity by staking the stock of potting mix and compacting the many items and nursery materials held in the shed. Suzanne with her golden trowel and the assistance of Greg and Mike worked on weeding out the pots in the top shade house. When the lunch break was called they had cleaned up most of the upper benches but there were still more work to be done that will continue throughout the week.

The team of Su, Gray and Ross worked on the difficult area between Easton Street and the Dingo fence where luxuriant weed growth continues to be stimulated by the daily dosage of grey water being dispersed from the Resort along the dingo fence and extending well into the village side of the fence. Despite the area having been thoroughly cleaned in May the fresh crop of weeds, mainly Brazilian Nightshade was thriving. They also pruned along the Dingo fence to make access easier.

The All-women team, Maree, Mars, Ronnie and Trish, went to work weeding the gardens between the roundabout and the tennis court.

After smoko Maree took leave and set off to survey her special area including the large patch of Painted Spurge in front of Drop Bear Backpackers and Singapore Alley. She was encouraged by the success of the March planting there amongst the Pangola Grass but also identified many weeds including Singapore Daisy coral Creeper Coral Creeper. However as she ascended the North Face towards Maintenance Lookout she identified basket asparagus as the priority for the morrow.

There was an afternoon off with no planned outings and the time was used variously to relax or continue with light work which some opted for.

Hours worked: 12 x 5 60



The nursery bench space was extended.



Gray holds aloft the core of one of the dozens of large Basket Asparagus ferns removed around Singapore Alley

Monday 17th July

Another golden day in Paradise dawn almost cloudless and windless and incredibly mild for July.

Again today there were three groups with different components. The main group of seven led by Maree headed for Singapore Alley. A depleted nursery group was reduced to just Suzanne and Mars

The third group of Su, Greg and F.L. was much more fluid mainly because a major objective for Fearless Leader for the day was to spray outside the northern Dingo fence to contain the Coral creeper infestation.

Over dinner that night everyone was asked to describe their day and what had been accomplished. It was a very illuminating reflection of the day's activities. The men that had gone to Singapore Alley got engaged in a battle with Basket asparagus. Ross was prepared to use a method he had used many times before of ripping it out with a mattock. Gray was prepared for cutting around the root ball with a knife but was instructed to use a small saw instead. He thought that using saws in the sand was sacrilegious but later learnt the rationale for the use of a saw which worked well in the sand. It transpired that a volunteer on a previous trip had to be medivaced off the island after a severe cut using a knife on asparagus. Roger and Mike added to the effort and also dealt with many Easter Cassia. At the end of the session they delivered a trailer load of crowns to the dump for their effort and had cleaned up a large area of a spreading weed.

Ronnie and Trish went to work without fear removing painted spurge from in front of Drop Bear Backpackers despite being told of the sightings of two snakes in the last couple of weeks. They then went on to tackle Coral Creeper while Maries worked on Singapore daisy where it was attempting a comeback.

Suzanne and Mars went to the nursery prepared for a quiet day of clearing up without too much excitement when Su, F.L. and Greg rolled up seeking planting stock for Easton Street. Su said that she needed about 15 plants but went away with 33. Leaving the nursery looking a little more depleted and the car so overloaded that. Su had to nurse a whole heavy tray-full on her lap.

Back in Easton Street the trio was busy digging holes and watering the plants in although Fearless Leader slipped away to liaise with resort and park staff on a range of issues. He was waiting for the very heavy dew to dry off sufficiently to begin spraying Coral Creeper outside the dingo fence on the northern side of the village. After smoko with all the plants in the ground Greg and Fearless Leader took off on a dump run and Fearless Leader finally got to don his instrument of torture, a back pack full of chemicals and dispensed 15 litres on Coral Creeper and Brazilian Nightshade on the top of the ridge and down the other side from the pedestrian gate. It was work he continued and extended with another 27 litres after lunch.

After lunch a party of eight headed for Central Station where they enjoyed the walk (or run) to Pile Valley. The remaining four went to work on continuing progress around Eurong.

Hours worked: 12 x 5 + 8 68



Tuesday 18th July

The long drive to discover the drowned forest

It was a very early start to be ready by 7.00 am for the long drive to the western beach. The vehicles were loaded with victuals and pots ready for the absorbing and adventurous day ahead. The run along the beach was notable for the clarity of the air and the sparkling sea. However Su's sunglasses were lost in the bush yesterday

and she needed to protect her eye still sensitive after cataract surgery so they detoured to Happy Valley. While Su was left to shop the rest went on to explore the dump which was to have been one of this group's work projects this week. While they were inspecting the site they met a Discovery Tour guide Jacob who introduced himself describing his love for the island and the work of FIDO.

The party pressed on not stopping at many of the attractions on their way to the western beach. Once at Woralie they took time to appreciate the ambience of the Hervey Bay side and to have a smokeless smoko beside the reflective Woralie Creek surrounded by bird songs.

There was a relaxed journey north along the western beach observing the blowouts, the operation of the Sealegs landing craft at Bowarrady Creek, the array of shells, one bubbler spring, cliffs of coloured sands until they arrived at the drowned forest. Because of the beach build up there weren't as many of the ancient Syncarpia relics as sometimes seen. The rising tide posed some challenge on the way back to the Woralie track when there was a sighting of a cavorting whale breaching and tail slapping. The western beach foray was an unforgettable experience.

The next part of the adventure was to backtrack to Lake Allom and the Harold Charles Barracks where after lunch there was an emu parade to collect small wildings coming up like weeds in the cleared area and potting them up to grow them up in the nursery. With that very satisfying task complete and a pause to look at the lake, the group set off for the return home via the fens and Happy Valley. There was a pause at Puthoo Creek to photograph the rafts of floating sundews but just prior to reaching the fens the Fearless Leader in the lead car got hung-up whilst attempting to cross a fallen tree. He had to be rescued from this tricky situation by the rest of the party and the help of Roger's trusty saw. After the fens foray there was only one other pause at the strangler fig in Yidney scrub on the way back to Eurong where we arrived at exactly 6.00 pm



Empodisma provides the basis for the peat in the Fens

After a shortened but relaxing Happy Hour the group headed to the resort for a pleasant dinner after which F.L. was greeted by Garry Smith, managing director of the

Kingfisher Group and David Hay the group's operational manager.

Hours worked: 12 x 1 Harvesting wildings at Harold Charles Barracks 12



With woodchip covering less maintenance will be needed for the Demonstration Garden

Wednesday 19th July

It was yet another fine clear and warm morning except that the wind had shifted to the south west and progressively got stronger thought the day. It was too heavy for outside spraying although in the late afternoon out of the wind Sue was able to spray in her special forest.

The work teams this morning remained roughly the same except that Mike had volunteered to go with Greg to get the woodchip from the other side of the island at Kingfisher Resort. Their expectation of an early start didn't materialize so the engaged in painting an artistic production named "Green Poles" and artistically arranging the signs in the sign shelter to remove some that were superseded. It was 11.00 am before the Resort vehicle was ready to go to Kingfisher Resort. It was driven by Yogi a Torres Strait Islander on staff here. What they thought would be a trip of 2 to 3 hours turned out to take almost six hours. They worked with a team from Kingfisher by acting as traffic control and snagging the freshly cut Pibin logs down to the chipper that fed the woodchip straight into the trailer. They returned with a trailer load of woodchip for the garden too late for it to be put about leaving a big chore for the morrow.

After delivering Mars and Suzanne to the Nursery, Fearless Leader spent the morning to smoko working his way around an inspection across the front of the Resort and then past Problem corner to do a stock-take of the Nature Walk and its signage and condition. He was also intent on removing weeds around the circuit with a few infestations of Coral Creeper and one of Ester Cassia being eliminated. After smoko he retrieved the sprays and chemicals from Monday and worked around the shed.

Gray, Roger and Ross returned to the challenge of basket asparagus and a self-imposed challenge of removing cactus.

Su's self imposed task for the day started with working on weeding the garden near Tradewinds Units preparatory for the covering with woodchips. The new garden is now thriving with almost every plant surviving. Only Foxtail seems doubtful. Su continued on from that project to her favourite bush patch which is winning so much recognition for its weed free status

After lunch there was a semi siesta for an hour before people found new projects to busy themselves with while waiting for the arrival of the woodchip. Eventually we learnt that the earliest estimated arrival would be 4.00 pm. Gray, Roger and Fearless Leader went to discover a reported Camphor Laurel. F.L had a vague idea of the general area and thought that they could find it without a GPS. They explored his hunch without success and were heading for the nursery when he had another hunch at the old rubbish tip that proved just as unsuccessful and they were heading for the nursery again when they received a phone message with a more definitive clue and then saw a fresh track cut through the lantana. They followed this until they ran out of pink ribbons and were just about to abandon when Roger had the Eureka moment. Quickly the tree was drilled and filled and we expect that it will die slowly and hopefully without any offspring on the island. It was a hard tree to locate and a lucky find.

Meanwhile the rest of the team had gone to the Nursery to put in an hour of special effort cleaning up the floor of weeds and emergent. One plant removed resulted in an interesting show and tell after dinner.

Diner was a special slow cooked meal by Nick followed by baked stuffed apples and

Hours worked: $12 \times 4.5 + 12 \times 2 = 78$



Suzanne and Trish pot up volunteer wildings at Harold Charles Barracks

Thursday 20th July

Another beautiful golden morning dawned in Paradise after a crispy night but the wind had dropped and everyone was in a buoyant mood as they set off to their allotted tasks — the main one being the distribution of

woodchip that had been collected yesterday. The task involved all of the women except Su who continued to pursue weeds on sight between the toilet block and the dingo grid. It was a task that she pursued all day.

Ross was also on a self-assigned task dealing with lantana in front of Talinga and discovering infestations of Ester Cassia in the swamp area that he couldn't immediately deal with.

Gray and F.L had the chore to do a dump run. This they did but then before collecting the rubbish in the Singapore Alley area they decided to carry out an inspection of the Residential Valley where they made many discoveries. They set out on an emu parade near the Taxi House eliminating Painted Spurge and other weeds. They then turned their attention to the far end of the residential valley finding coral creeper and checking on Mother of Millions outside the dingo fence when they were summons for smoko by the pool.

The Woodchip team had finished work and ran out of woodchip before they ran out of gardens needing covering. However the gardens to the east of the tennis court but not the roundabout garden were covered as well as the garden in front of Tradewinds.

Following smoko FL and Gray went to work on the smelly plant outside Talinga while Mike and Greg cleared the fallen tree across the Nature Walk which has been vandalized near the ancient Melaleucas and shifted illegally dumped rubbish on to the heap of Council tree prunings that the Council is committed to removing with a truck.

After a lavish lunch the team less Su and Maree set off for a Southern Lakes run stopping at both Lake Boomanjin and Lake Birrabeen before returning before dark to find Su still dealing with weeds. We had little time to prepare ourselves for another resort evening this time working on an Asian (Chinese, Thai Indian etc) cuisine

Hours worked: $(12 \times 5) + 4 = 64$



Roger inspects the valuable folk art "Green Poles" created by Greg and Mike

Friday 21st July

It was yet another fine balmy morning after a cool to cold night. It was the last morning of weeding for half the group on the island because of their commitment to carry out a weed (sea-grass) survey in Great Sandy Strait on Saturday that has a most suitable time when their volunteered resources will be much needed. The team wanted to get away by 12.00 noon and they did but not before putting in a busy morning clearing around the young trees in Singapore Alley (Maree, Roger Trish and Mars), assisting Suzanne in the nursery (Ronnie) and carrying out maintenance work on the Nature Walk (Mike and Greg). Meanwhile F.L. and Gray were busy with dump runs and Su was busy pumping out another 15 litres of glyphosate maintaining the area where many lesser weeds were emerging.

After morning tea the frenzied pace continued as the departure deadline loomed. After an 11.30 lunch and a 12.00 noon departure of the Coast Watch monitors and with the other deadline for finishing up the Super Six slipped up the pace another notch. F.L. went off to carry out the photo-monitoring and spraying and manually removing the odd weed. He sprayed a little around Problem Corner where the Green Panic has been almost entirely eliminated but where outbreaks of the persistent *Syngonium* remain. In Singapore Alley he sprayed around the emerging small plants and recent plantings and finished off the backpack contents on Coral Creeper going up the Alley before returning to clean all of the sprays and clean up the shed.

Roger and Suzanne worked until 5.00 pm finishing up the Nursery planting out trays of propagation material while Gray and Ross continued their work outside the dingo fence attacking mainly Brazilian Nightshade while following the walking track to Central Station. The Nightshade petered out as they moved further from the village. Everyone worked until the last light.

The Super Six were joined for dinner at Talinga by local residents, David and Marion Anderson who have been assisted FIDO by addressing the weeds in the Residential Valley. It was great dinner and a great evening.

Hours worked: $(12 \times 4) + (6 \times 5) = 78$



The Nursery was weeded and restocked

Saturday 21st July

It was a smooth and uneventful departure from Talinga. Everyone was ready before the scheduled deadline and despite apprehensions everything squeezed into Sujo. There was even time to check a couple of monitoring stations on the way to the ferry. The two vehicles parted at Mary River Heads and returned home.



Patterns in the sand, Lake Boomanjin

Monitoring & Reviewing Progress

F.L.'s photo monitoring caused him to take stock of progress made not just on this working bee but on the working bees that he and Su had been working on with BMRG funding since 2010.

Easton Street: When FIDO began the four-monthly Bush Regeneration programs in Eurong back in 2005 there was a small mountain of garden waste in Easton Street that had been dumped by residents and landholders just across the road. Since that was removed there has been a continual battle to control the weeds there. That problem was exacerbated when a new method of dispersing the Resort's treated grey water has compounded the problem. While it is possible to see the slow transition of the site of the earlier rubbish pile, unfortunately the before and afters can't be captured in the irrigation zone because this is mainly amongst the trees which can't be readily captured by photography. By continual intensive effort involving spraying at intervals of no more than two months the luxuriant weed growth is being contained by preventing viable seed being set.

Roundabout and demonstration gardens: Since 2005, particularly since 2010, the transformation here has been captured on photos as the new plantings increase in stature. The aim is to reduce the need for maintenance by a thick covering of woodchip to suppress new weed growth. However the development of the capacity of the Eurong Nursery to grow plants suitable for gardens and replacement plantings is critical.

Problem Corner: While there are still a few problems in this area they are being progressively brought under

control. The next stage is to begin planting more trees on the embankment and the Nomad Backpackers are keen to assist in these endeavours.

Jarvis Street: In 2005 this area was being overrun by Madeira Vine and other weeds. Like Problem Corner this is now an area of watch and maintenance because it is relatively weed free although as long as the illegal garden wast dumping continues it is at risk. It is an area of on-going vandalism with some signs and a monitoring post being removed.

The Esplanade area in front of Residential Valley:

While David Anderson and other residents maintain Anderson Street and other parts of the Residential Valley, the area in front up to the dingo fence are still problem areas with a thick sward of grass camouflaging infestations of Mother in Laws Tongue, Coral Creeper, Singapore Daisy and Painted Spurge. This is difficult to control without killing the grass but persistent efforts are bringing these weeds under control and efforts are now being directed to plantings of natives to suppress these weeds.



The lower section of the nursery after the bench extension

Other Areas not subject to photo monitoring: The most critical areas for weeds are in bush areas that cannot be photographed in any meaningful way to show the progress in addressing the weeds of Eurong either because of the expanse of the areas or because they are located in forest that makes large landscape pictures impossible. The three areas being addressed are:

- (a) **Su's forest from the toilet block to the western Dingo grid:** In the last year this area has received more hours of voluntary labour than

any other single area of Eurong except perhaps for the Nursery. While the results can't be easily photographed the transformation has drawn high praise from those who saw the area and were weeding before Su claimed the area as her special project. Two of the volunteers recalled walking through the area two years ago and manually removing literally thousands of Coral Creeper as well as other weeds. Now despite the adverse impact of the grey water irrigation system affecting more than a third of the area only isolated specimens of Coral Creeper can be found and few other priority weeds are found there proving that "Persistence Pays."

- (b) **The Nature Walk USL:** FIDO has established two tracks to assist with monitoring and managing weeds in the USL separating Eurong's Resort Valley from the Residential Valley. The usual suspects such as Coral Creeper and Easter Cassia that are still found in this zone are still being found but in much lesser numbers. In July there was a special assault on Basket Asparagus fern which has almost now been purged. There is also a plethora of others but they are all in decline. We may have succeeded in eliminating Cape Honeysuckle and Glory Lily from this zone altogether.
- (c) **The USL beyond the dingo fence:** Three areas that aren't subject to photo-monitoring are outside the dingo fence. A small area west of Residential Valley had an outbreak of Mother of Millions and Coral Creeper that has been brought under control. The larger weeds, Lantana and Easter Cassia have been largely eliminated from the area between the beach and the dingo fence but there are other weeds that need to be addressed there including Singapore Daisy. A very large area north of the dingo fence that had escaped attention for a few years has during 2017 been dealt with aggressively but there is much more follow-up needed to ensure that no Coral creeper and Brazilian Nightshade remains to escape any further into the bush



The reflective section of Woralee Creek near estuary