



Susanne's Domain, the Eurong Nursery

Report Eurong Interim Working Bee 15th -19th May 2018

Interim Working Bees (IWBs) is a FIDO program funded by the Department of Environment and Science to carry out weed and nursery maintenance at Eurong Fraser Island (K'gari) between the three annual larger and longer scheduled bush regeneration working bees. It was found that allowing four months to elapse between these trips was too long a gap. Weeds germinate and seed in less time and so by dealing with these problems every two months or so, when the larger groups (ranging in size from 6 to 16), come they don't lose time in making new progress. The teams for the Interim Working Bees are limited to four and include experienced bush regenerators who are familiar with the history of the Eurong bush regeneration program.

The team for this trip included

John Sinclair who has been working on weed management at Eurong for more than 25 years,

Su Dawson who has participated in more than 40 bush regeneration programs on K'gari over the past 20 years,

Suzanne Wilson, a much experienced bush regenerator and nursery person who now leads FIDO's Eurong overall weeding program, and

Fran Thomas, a person with decades of bush regeneration experience in Brisbane urban creek catchments.

Community relationships: Apart on reporting on the vital weed maintenance work, this report illustrates the value of building community relationships that comes through direct interactions with K'gari workers and residents at all levels that can't be established from a distance.

Monday: The weather looked perfect for our first days on the island. Setting out from Brisbane at 7.00am, we caught the 12.30 ferry for Kingfisher Resort and once on K'gari immediately set about collecting seed at the resort *Psychotria loniceroides* and midyim (*Austromyrtus dulcis*) then it was a comfortable trip across the island to Eurong where we immediately unloaded and headed to the nursery where we deposited 12 bags of potting mix. Then it was a busy remainder of the day assessing the situation and priorities for work over the following three days. Seed cleaning commenced.

Tuesday: The Fearless Leader had to abandon his three colleagues to attend a FINIA Meeting in Maryborough because FIDO is strongly committed to supporting and developing this collaboration to protect the natural resources on K'gari (Fraser Island), with weeds being a high priority. The outcome of the meeting justified sacrificing a day of IWB work

It was a perfect day, cloudless, mild and ideal for spraying weeds. Su went through fifty litres of glyphosate mainly on weeds between Easton Street and the dingo fence and east of the toilet block. When she ran out of chemical she turned to manual weeding mainly close to the Link Walking Track to Central Station (near roundabout).

Suzanne and Fran went to the nursery and spent the whole day purging the pots of small Flick Weed seedlings, which appears to be under control after many months of weeding. There was also a lot of tidying up done as plants were moved from the top tunnel to the lower tunnel.



BEFORE. This was taken before the pots below containing *Syzigium* were cleansed of these weeds. The Nursery was infected with weeds, many arising from mowing the lawn above the adjacent embankment.

AFTER. These pots were barely visible for weeds prior to being purged. This is probably the clearest demonstration of how necessary it is to carry out maintenance work at the nursery at least every two months.

Wednesday: The Weather had changed. There was some overnight rain but it dried out during the day that enabled the Weed Ninja to dispense many litres of

glyphosate during the day after a collaborative effort to plant about 16 advanced Dianellas's at the Roundabout.

Following the Roundabout planting, there was a fortuitous encounter with the new Eurong Resort groundsman, Freddie Saunders. Freddie is a Butchulla man who has recently returned to country after living for 32 years in Cape York Peninsula. This chance meeting opened the door to a new partnership on developing the Resort landscaping.

After the Roundabout planting the nursery pair, Suzanne and Fran, commenced weeding in the bottom section of the nursery. They also spaced out and trimmed up the Callistemons and Melaleucas as some were not getting enough water. They varied their other chores between weeding, tending, potting and taking and preparing cuttings and further seed cleaning. They took their own lunch to the nursery and put in a full 8 hours of very productive work.

The Fearless Leader was back but not feeling physically strong enough to undertake the spraying program that he had optimistically anticipated and Su advised that his anticipated mat of weed seedlings in the area weeded in February hadn't eventuated. So after mixing up over 100 litres of glyphosate and discovering that his new Bushranger backpack spray was short of vital parts at 10.00 he visited David Anderson. After acquiring David's Cassia Blitz photos he joined David on a sample of the work done during the Cassia Blitz two weeks earlier when David eliminated about 10 mature Easter Cassia in front of the Beach Houses. At the end of this exercise he was so exhausted he slept for three hours after lunch. David Anderson was energized and went to the nursery with Marion and collected about a dozen more plants for themselves and other residential valley properties. They were also pleased to see the progress of wildlings and cuttings from their garden now thriving in the nursery environment.

Thursday: The weather had taken a turn for the worse. Over 20 mm rain had fallen before breakfast and it continued to rain intermittently throughout the day logging up 42 mm.

In the process of taking the nursery team to work a meeting with Resort manager Greg Hilton led to some very productive outcomes for the day. After refilling the empty mixed glyphosate containers and unclogging the spray nozzles, the Fearless Leader contacted the Resort Maintenance Manager, John Dolphin. At 10.30 John Dolphin and Freddy went to the nursery with him. They were presented with the book *Guide to Weeds of the Sunshine Coast* and a copy of the Fraser Island Native Planting Guide that Freddy eagerly offered to study and took away about 50 crinum lilies for planting around the Restaurant. It was a very helpful liaison session.

It wasn't the only useful liaison because later in the day there was an encounter with some park rangers including Barry who also does work in the nursery for QPWS.

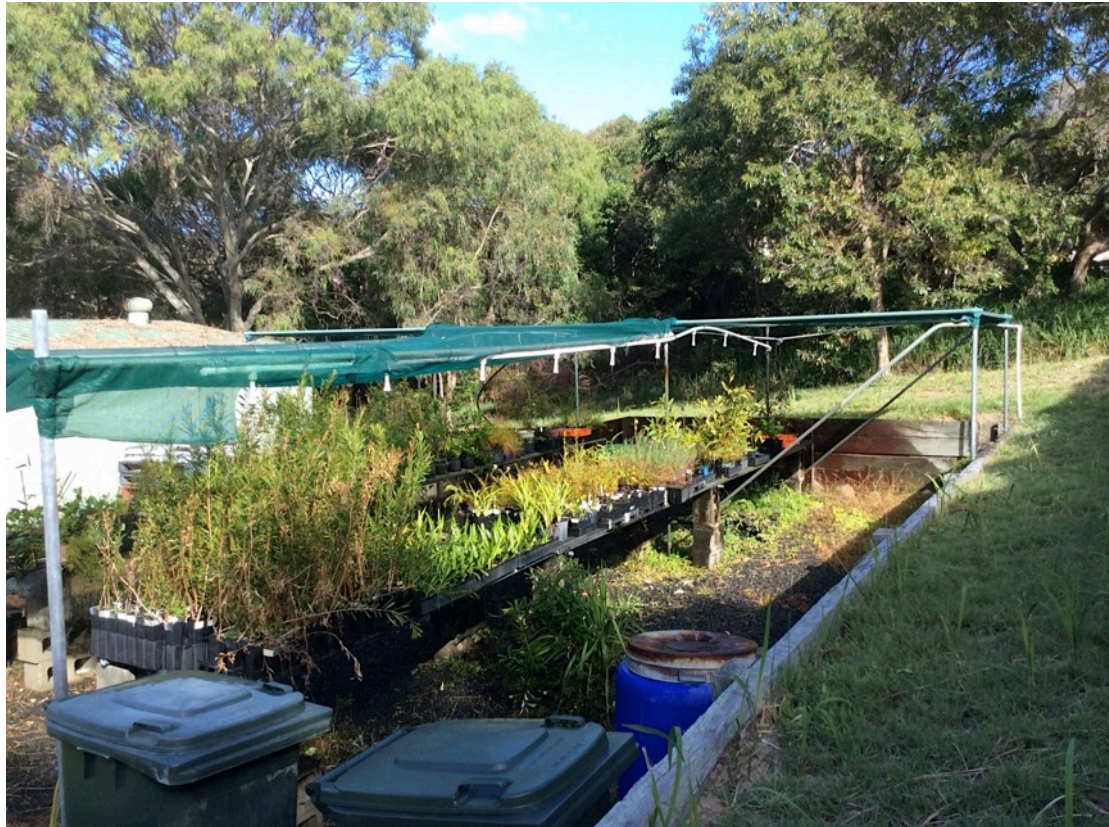
During the afternoon the group took advantage of the low tide to drive to Happy Valley to assess the dump there preparatory to making a submission on the Fraser Coast Regional Council Waste Management Strategy. They also found and collected seed from *Banksia integrifolia* that had been left at the dump to be

burned for the nursery. Suzanne and Fran returned to the nursery and worked on cuttings, seed sowing and potting on until it was almost dark. All the work planned for the nursery had been completed.

Su started the day spending half an hour cleaning up paper daisies around toilet block. The problem here continues to grow in volume due to the inadequate capacity of the existing toilet block to meet the demand. This has prompted another approach to the Fraser Coast Regional Council to duplicate the existing toilet block. She then worked in the bus wash area and along to the roundabout. At 11.30 she and F.L. worked on the Brazilian nightshade in the canopy outside the Easton Street Dingo Fence. While the others were at Happy Valley Su continued to work on her weeds and was able to get some spraying done between showers.

Friday: The unsettled weather continued and although it didn't rain in the evening and early night it resumed at about 3.00 am. San Antonio was cleaned and cleared by 8.00am and the group caught the ferry at Wangoolba Creek. After farewelling Suzanne at Yandina the remaining trio met up with Butchulla elder Lorraine Woolley on Brisbane's outskirts for a very interesting interaction before reaching home just on dark after a very satisfying week.

More than 100 plants potted on into tubes and 140 mm size pots. Also cuttings taken and potted as well as *Psychotria*, *Austomyrtus*, *Leptospermum liversidgei* and Pandanus seed trays sowed. *Psychotria lonicerodites* and *Leptospermum liversidgei* being new additions to our nursery species. Previous sowing is progressing well and we will have much to do again in July.



The Nursery now has a large stock of native plants and the range of species continues to grow