

Echo Valley Teams.

Toowoomba's Girls Brigade held a weed busting day at Echo Valley South Park on Saturday 15th May.

Over 50 members, families and leaders helped to remove weeds at the park. They were targeting a variety of weeds including Black-eyed Susan, Privet, Red Natal grass, African Lovegrass & Cobbler's Pegs.

Prizes were awarded the longest Black-eyed Susan removed and for the most amount of bins emptied. It was such a success that the **Wanless** industrial bin at the site was quickly filled to overflowing.

Participants and FEP members were delighted with the results achieved and shared a BBQ at the end of the event.

Greg Lukes (FEP)

THE QUEENSLAND Rail (QR) Silver Spike team had a pre-show workout at Echo Valley South Park on the 14th April (the day before the Toowoomba Show).

Queensland Rail workers visited Toowoomba as part of the annual Silver Spike competition which is a unique spectacle where competitors manually lay 13-metres of track in the fastest time at major events including a heat held at the Toowoomba Show.

The QR team members descended upon bushland surrounding the Echo Valley motocross track to assist local organisation Friends of the Escarpment Parks, Toowoomba.

"Like most other bushland in Australia this has been overrun by weeds and in this part of the country it is Broad Leaf Privet and Lantana causing trouble," Mr McLean said. "They've done an amazing job. Where else can you whistle up a team like that?"

QR representative Nathan Scholz said the project sprang from a Chronicle story on March 12 calling for interest from not-for-profit groups in acquiring a bit of free labour. The team that assisted FEP won the local Silver Spike event at the show.

Megan Masters
The Chronicle

Parkcare Groups.

Parkcare groups are volunteers doing rehabilitation work on these Sundays each month.

Nielsen Park (To be advised)

Prince Henry Heights (3rd Sunday)

Waterbird Habitat (4th Sunday)

Would you like to get involved?

Nielsen Park

This park is located at the eastern end of Tarlington Street or can be accessed via Rowbotham Street and/or Nielsen Court.

Prince Henry Heights

This group is still working along Prince Henry Drive.

The Waterbird Habitat

This group is active on the 4th Sunday each month on the main land and the islands.

Rehabilitation may include weed removal, propagating and planting native species as well as monitoring plants and wildlife.

For more information on Parkcare groups and to confirm dates, please contact –

Kristie Jenkinson (TRC)

4688 6514 or 0408 714 215

kristie.jenkinson@toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au

FEP News.

Nielsen Park – A group of about 30 Concordia Lutheran College grade 10 students worked in Nielsen Park on Monday March 15th under the supervision of their coordinator Mrs. Ku Lacey and FEP members Gene Creek, Euan Mclean and John Swarbrick. The students enjoyed the outdoor weeding experience.

Waterbird Habitat – About 25 Girl Guides have spent time at the park controlling Stinking Roger in the area where there is an endangered species of native grass.

Thanks to all those that participated.

Friends of the Escarpment Parks
Toowoomba Inc.

Newsletter Editor Greg Lukes
glukes@bigpond.com

Would you like to support FEP? Membership is only \$5 per year (\$10/Family)



The
**Escarpment
Park Friend**

Jul – Aug 2010

Hugh Krenske 4635 1758

info@fep.org.au

www.fep.org.au

FEP, Caring for Toowoomba's Bushlands

In this issue-

- **Caring for our Country Grant**
- **Weed Watch – Wandering Jew**
- **Species Watch – Bell Fruit**
- **Echo Valley Teams**
- **Parkcare Groups**
- **FEP News – Park Activities**

Weed Information Project.

Caring For Our Country Grant

FEP has been successful in gaining a grant to prepare and publish information on local environmental and potential environmental weeds under the Federal Government's Caring For Our Country Grant scheme 2010.

The project will include the preparation, publishing and launch of a weeds poster, booklet and CD by 30 June 2011. In conjunction with the launch of these materials, FEP will hold a number of weed workshops at which we shall have experts and other interested people from various organisations as speakers. Workshops will be widely promoted to both the general community and interested groups. The poster, booklet and CD will all be used in FEP and the Toowoomba Regional Council's ongoing community education role in the future.

Now we will have to get to work! The first step will be to develop the resources that we shall need. This will include listing the environmental weeds and potential environmental weeds of the Toowoomba region, gathering good photographs of each, and writing a short text about each weed covering its identification, origin,

introduction into Australia, local distribution, environmental impact and methods of control. Some of this work has already been done by FEP members and Council. We will then need to have the material printed and prepared for distribution. This will be followed by a launch towards the end of this year, then a series of local workshops and forums to educate the public.

The opportunity to apply for this grant was spotted by Kristy Jenkinson, who obtained and completed the application forms. FEP and Council will need to work closely together to complete this large project on schedule.

Progress Report

Two meetings have been held between Kristie Jenkinson and John Swarbrick, the second with Mark Cant from National Parks. A Reference Group has been set up consisting of Weeds Officers from the Toowoomba Regional Council, Department of Primary Industries and National Parks. A preliminary list of environmental weeds and potential environmental weeds was sent out, commented on and returned, discussed by Kristie and John. The list has been sent back to the reference group for comment.

A brief text for each weed has been written covering local common and scientific name, form, leaf shape, flowers, impact, control and ongoing management, and circulated.

Arrangements have been made with DPI to obtain colour photographs. Drafts of the Introduction and Methods of Weed Control have been written.

John Swarbrick (FEP)

Weed Watch.

Wandering Jew

Tradescantia fluminensis

A native to South America, Wandering Jew (*tradescantia fluminensis*) or as it is sometimes called "Trad" is a fleshy-leaved creeping plant that grows as a ground cover.

It is popular in gardens as it establishes easily in moist shady areas.



Wandering Jew has become a major environmental weed in many areas particularly along streams and gullies where it spreads quickly and out competes other natives.

Infestations of this plant up to 1 metre deep have been found in north Queensland.

Wandering Jew has fleshy green shiny leaves with noticeable parallel veins and each leaf has a sheath at the base covered in small hairs. The stems and leaves of this plant are weak and easily broken. Small white three-petalled flowers are produced primarily in spring.



Wandering Jew sends out roots at each nodal point allowing it to trail over the ground to form a thick carpet-like cover. Wandering Jew reproduces via stolons (above ground runners), seed and tubers. Hand weeding to carefully remove the whole plant including the roots and nodes is effective but can be labour intensive.



All plant material removed should be placed into a black plastic bag and placed in the sun for a few days before being disposed with household rubbish. There are a few chemicals registered for the control of Wandering Jew. (All herbicides must be applied strictly in accordance with the directions on the label)

Please note that Wandering Jew is not to be confused with a similar looking plant Commelina diffusa (native Wandering Jew) which is native to south-east Queensland. Native Wandering Jew has blue flowers (usually in autumn) and a slender tapered leaf, unlike the weed species whose leaves are fleshier, rounded and glossier.

The native Wandering Jew is not an environmental weed.

Toowoomba Regional Council Bushcare
www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au/bushcare
Toowoomba RC Weed of the Month
Toowoomba Bushcare Facebook Site

Wandering Jew is also a problem in the back yards with pets. It can cause an irritating rash on dogs encouraging them to rub on the cool leaves and causing even more irritation.

Greg Lukes (FEP)

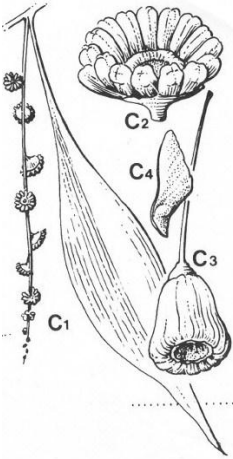
Species Watch.

Bell Fruit in Duggan Park

Codonocarpus attenuatus

The post-fire vegetation of Duggan Park shows the widespread and common occurrence of Bell Fruit seedlings 3 to 5m tall throughout the burnt area.

Bell Fruit seedlings are small slender trees with smooth pale greenish-brown bark and slender tapering leaves.



Bell Fruit
Hugh Nicholson
Terania Rainforest
Publishing

Bell Fruit drawings
Flora of
South-eastern
Queensland Vol. 1

Some of the smaller seedlings have already died (presumably from drought and competition), but large numbers of 4-5 m tall seedlings remain. Their lower shoots have mostly died but they have vigorous growth at the top. I do not remember seeing Bell Fruit in Duggan Park before the fire. The Flora of South-eastern Queensland notes that Bell Fruit is a deciduous tree that is usually found in light rainforest or wet Eucalypt forest.

This find leads to several conclusions:

- viable Bell Fruit seeds must have been present in the soil in significant numbers for at least several decades,
- the area must have been rainforest or softwood forest quite recently (within the last 50 years), and

- their germination must have been stimulated by the fire and perhaps by subsequent soil disturbance.

The future vegetation and hence fire management and species retention of this area of Duggan Park requires discussion with TRC.

The vegetation along the edge of the range escarpment appears to have been mixed softwood and vine scrub, light rainforest, hoop and possibly bunya pine forest and grassy Eucalypt and Wattle woodland before European settlement about 150 years ago. Seedlings of softwood plants such as Native Bleeding Heart (*omolanthus populifolius*) and Red Ash (*alphitonia excelsa*) as well as Wattles (*acacia*. spp) regularly appear in gardens along the edge of the range, and Red Ash seedlings are very common in the post-fire regeneration in Duggan Park. Red Ash was common in the burnt area of Duggan Park before the fire and the dominant grasses were the rainforest and shade-loving species Weeping Rice-grass (*microlaena stipoides*) and *oplismenus aemulus*, whilst the unburnt section at the northeast corner of Duggan Park still demonstrates this vegetational mix.

It is suggested that the future vegetation of the flat upper section of Duggan Park should be predominantly soft-wooded tree species and their associated shrubs, vines, grasses and forbs rather than a simpler and less biodiverse vegetation dominated by Eucalypts and Wattles, although these would have a place. This would better represent the pre-European vegetation of the area, be more biodiverse and be easier for TRC to develop and manage than a predominantly Eucalypt and Wattle woodland or forest. All that would be required would be to exclude fire altogether from Duggan Park, to keep up selective weeding (eg of Lantana) and to favour softwood species rather than the Wattles and Eucalypts in future management.

John Swarbrick (FEP)