



Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands Inc
The right tree in the right place for the right reason

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Anderson Road Landscape Linkage

The Anderson Road Landscape Linkage project has been funded through the World Wide Fund for Nature Threatened Species Community Grants project. On Saturday, March 17, around 40 TREAT and TKMG volunteers planted trees in the Anderson Road project area to strengthen regrowth forest between the Pearamon Scrub and remnant forest on the North Johnstone River near Winfield Park. The area is known to support tree kangaroo populations and a strong emphasis was placed on planting tree kangaroo food plants.

TREAT and TKMG are working cooperatively through the project to promote the endangered status of upland rain forest found on basalt soils in very wet areas known as TYPE1B Complex Mesophyll Vine Forest which occurs in this area. Less than 10% of this forest type now remains. Another endangered species associated with this forest type is the southern cassowary and it is hoped that locals will also become more aware of the threats of habitat clearing, roads and dogs that are known to contribute to deaths of local wildlife the cassowary being no exception. If you'd like to get more involved in the project or would like further information, contact Tania Murphy, Project Manager, on 4095 3406.

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TREAT on TAP

TREAT on TAP will hit the coast this term. Tully Primary School students will participate in the TREAT on TAP program involving a visit to the C4 nursery and TREATS Walter Hill Ranges planting sites, a classroom session on trees and the environment and a tree planting at the school. The program has a distinct "Cassowary" flavour.

TREAT and CTR are working with Atherton High School again this year on the Mabi Forest project.

Year 11 Horticulture students learn about Mabi Forest and how to propagate rain forest trees for restoration projects. Students will visit the CTR nursery and get involved in their own Mabi forest tree planting at the school and at Halloran's Hill.

TREAT remains committed to educating our youth! If you have an interest in children and education and would like to help out, TREAT on Tap is looking for extra volunteers to get involved in our school programs. Contact Tania Murphy or Joan Wright.

Fruit of the Month

Burdekin Plum (*Pleogynium timorense*)

What a great tree! Great in stature and great for wildlife. Burdekin Plum is a very widespread species ranging from lowland rainforest to highland rainforest throughout north east Queensland and extending south to the Mary River in SE Queensland and commonly found in open forest. It is also reported to occur on the Cook Islands and the Philippines. On a recent foray to Holloways Beach north of Cairns the ground was littered with the plump purple fruits of large Burdekin Plum trees only metres from the beach. TREAT members who visited Forty Mile Scrub will no doubt recall the 20 m plus tree gracing the main picnic area testimony to the broad distribution and diverse habitat preferences of this species.

The tree itself can have a majestic form and makes an excellent specimen/ shade tree. Leaves are compound and alternate often with soft hairs. The fruit is comprised of a very hard end woody endocarp (inner seed) with an edible fleshy covering. Individual trees can crop very heavily with a large fruit fall.

The plump fleshy covering can be quite sweet and juicy in ripe fruit making good eating or jam or wine making. Obviously the fruit also provides an important food source to native wildlife like birds and bats. Pleiogynium comes from the greek pleion, more + Gyne, woman and refers to many female parts (stigmas) of the flower.

What Happened to the East Evelyn Road Planting?

TREAT carried out its TREAT on TAP program successfully with students of the Millaa Millaa Primary School in February. They had a booklet specially prepared for them to understand rainforest, roads and wildlife. An Aboriginal elder talked to them about life in the rainforest. Their visit to the Lake Eacham nursery was happy though we! Presentations were made to Ravenshoe Primary and High Schools explaining the need for the planting adjacent to the wildlife underpasses. The Ravenshoe / Koombaloo Information Centre provided support for the planting day. Bus transport and a barbecue at the Millaa Millaa Lookout were arranged.

The weather was very bad in February, though the day of the planned planting on March 3rd was fine and sunny. However, the planting was postponed by the Main Roads Department because site preparation had been delayed by the bad weather. All the plans were rearranged for Saturday April 7th. Again the weather turned cold, windy and wet and the contractor, who was responsible for the safety of the people on the site, cancelled our second attempt.

Most of the 2000 trees were planted by the nursery staff and it is planned for some TREAT volunteers to plant a few trees on a safe part of the hillside later.

I believe the East Evelyn Road planting is a good concept which has been dogged by bad weather.

Seen a Platypus?

Project Platypus Barron River Catchment is seeking your sightings!

The Barron River Catchment Group, with funding from the Natural Heritage Trust, wishes to document the past and present distribution of local platypus populations. We are interested in any platypus sightings, but will be focusing our results on sightings within the Barton catchment.

The second part of Project Platypus will be working with landholders in the catchment who express an interest in enhancing habitat / waterway health on their property, want to be involved in the ongoing monitoring of platypus in their area, or just want to know more about their resident platypus.

If this sounds like you, or if you have seen a platypus please fill out an orange sighting form (available from TREAT, or sent with your TREAT newsletter if you live near the catchment).

Or contact project officer:
Carol Schmidt

Barron River ICMA website: www.barronrivercatchment.org.au/

We look forward to hearing from you!



TREAT INFO-NOTES

REPLANTING THE RAINFOREST No. 4: Maintenance & Monitoring

Background

It is now almost 12 months since you started on the project and the young trees have finally been planted out. But the job is not over - you now need a program of maintenance to make sure the young trees become established and grow quickly. You should consider:

- Weed control: competition from unwanted weed species can severely affect tree growth and survival.
- Water supply: a short period of dry weather can kill newly planted trees.
- Fertilisers: you want the young trees to grow as quickly as possible, and for that they need food.
- Replacing dead seedlings: if a young tree dies, should it be replaced?

As you watch the planting grow towards maturity, you can gain much useful information that will help you in future replanting projects. By monitoring the progress of the replanted area and evaluating your methods, you can improve your chances of success.

MAINTENANCE OF YOUNG TREES

Control weeds

Fast-growing perennial tropical grasses and herbaceous annuals such as thistles (*Sonchus spp.*) and blue tops (*Ageratum spp.*), can choke out the slower-growing young trees. Regular weed control is needed until the trees have grown large enough to close their canopies and shade out the competing weed species.

Mowing or slashing are not the most successful methods of weed control. Because they do not kill the weeds, their roots continue to compete vigorously with the root systems of the young trees for water and nutrients. The most successful method of weed control is one that kills the weeds by hand - pulling; grubbing out or spraying with weedicide.

Alternatively, weeds can be controlled by mulches that prevent their seeds from germinating. An organic mulch such as straw (make sure it is free of weed seeds), shredded paper, peanut shells, or similar agricultural waste products can be applied to the whole area.

If the replanted area is large, consider mulching an area of 1m around the trees. The remaining area can then be sprayed regularly to kill any germinating weeds using a systemic weedicide such as Glyphosate (refer to product label for application rates). Be very careful not to spray the young trees.

With good weed control the young trees will grow rapidly and the canopy will close in about 12-18 months. After canopy closure, the main problem areas for weed control will be the edges of the planting. When the major tree species are 8-10.m high, the edges can be filled in with vines such as October Surprise (*Faradaya splendida*), Kangaroo Vine (*Cissus antartica*), Milla Vine (*Elaeagnus triflora*), or Wait-a-whiles (*Calamus spp.*), or bushy species from the Liliipilli (*Syzyjurn spp.*) and Satinash (*Acmena spp.*) groups.

Water the trees

Because planting out took place during the 'wet' season, there is usually enough rainfall to provide sufficient water for the young trees. However, until the trees grow a root system extending out about 50 cm, a hot dry period of 2-3 weeks can kill them. Therefore, in the 3-4 months after planting out, be prepared to hand water if there is insufficient rainfall to keep the soil moist. Mulches will help to conserve water, as well as controlling weed species that steal, water from the young trees.

Fertilise the seedlings

Fertiliser applied at the time of planting will be sufficient for about 1-2 months. Additional fertiliser will be needed every 4 weeks during the main growth season for the first 2 years after planting out. Firstly remove any surface mulch. Then apply about 500 grams of an organic fertiliser or 100 grams of a complete inorganic fertiliser to each tree, sprinkling it on the top of the soil 20-30cm from the stem. Replace the surface mulch or lightly rake the fertiliser into the top of the soil (make sure not to disturb the roots of the young tree). By the end of the second year, fertilising can stop because the trees will be well grown and leaf litter will be returning nutrients to the soil.

Replant dead seedlings

If young trees die during the first year replace these seedlings as soon as possible. However if the surviving trees are about 1 m high, replacing the dead tree is not recommended because the other trees will easily out grow the new seedling and shade it out as soon as the canopy closes.

When replacing a young tree that has died, do not plant the new seedling in the same planting hole. If the young tree died from a root disease, the disease organism is possibly present in the old planting hole and may quickly kill the new seedling. A new planting hole should be prepared about 30-50 cm to one side of the old hole.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

When you commenced your program of replanting the rainforest, you had a set of objectives you wanted to achieve. Through evaluation of our current efforts we improve our knowledge about what worked, what did not work, and what we can do to achieve greater success in future replanting efforts. Monitoring is the process of continuous evaluation, where we observe and measure what is happening before, during and after planting out.

The amount of detail collected during monitoring will depend on what you want to achieve during the evaluation process. For example, Forest Ecologists may want to make very precise recommendations on the best method of revegetation to use in a new environment. They would set out to compare the success of the 3 methods of revegetation, the framework species method, the maximum diversity method, and the natural regeneration method (See Info Note 1).

Very detailed measurements would be needed over an extended period of time (time frames of decades are common in forest ecology). Such a data set were collected by TREAT consultants in the Pelican Point Revegetation Project where the same set of measurements were collected regularly over a 6 year period. These included:

- Planned and achieved planting density.
- Canopy and ground cover, usually at 5 points within the plot.
- Litter depth, also at 5 points within the plot.
- Species planted.
- Species present and estimated volume by major type: grasses; forbs; perennial herbs; creepers; sedges; shrubs; vines; and trees.
- Height and girth measurements of selected trees.
- Seedlings present; number and species.
- New species accrued to the planting.
- Dates of first flowering and fruiting.
- Bird and animal species present within the replanted area.

An interested environmentalist also needs to monitor an devaluate what occurred in the replanted area if they are to improve their chances of success in future replanting projects. The minimum information needed to evaluate the success of a project includes:

- Photographs (from the same point) before and during site preparation, planting, then every 3 months until canopy closure.
- The number of trees of each species planted.
- The number of each species that died, and when.
- The height and girth (at 50cm above ground level) of each species, every 3-4 months, (Select the same 5-10 trees of each species to measure).
- When native birds and animals are seen on what dates in the replanted area.

Land for Wildlife

Gaining momentum in North Queensland

Land for Wildlife is a nature conservation program which provides support, information and encouragement to private landholders who manage some or all of their property as wildlife habitat. The program is voluntary and is not legally binding. Landholders are eligible to join Land for Wildlife if their property meets the following criteria:

- Some or all of the land should be managed as wildlife habitat, and
- The landholder should be making some attempt to integrate nature conservation with other land uses on the property.

The scheme began in Victoria over 20 years ago, and there are now more than 5000 landholders registered in that State. Land for Wildlife started in north Queensland in February 2000, and is managed by North Queensland Afforestation Association with funding from Bushcare.

Delivery of the program is through a cooperative arrangement between the three levels of government, and community and non-government organisations such as Greening Australia. Eleven Local authorities are providing support to Land for Wildlife in north Queensland the Shires of Atherton, Cardwell, Cook, Douglas, Eacham, Herberton, Hinchinbrook, Johnstone, Mareeba, Thuringowa City and Townsville City.

Landholders who are registered with Land for Wildlife become part of a wider network of the conservation-conscious. Other benefits include free access to information on managing wildlife and its habitat, and recognition in the form of a metal sign for the property and a certificate of registration. Where a property doesn't meet the eligibility requirements it can be admitted under the category of "Working towards registration" and details will be provided to the landholder outlining what needs to be done to achieve full registration.

As of the 28th February 2001, there were 67 properties registered with the scheme in north Queensland, with more properties on the waiting list for assessment. These properties are providing habitat for a diverse range native species, such as southern Cassowaries, green possums, Mueller's stag-beetles, musky rat-kangaroos, Papuan frogmouths, taipans, whistling spiders, bush stone-curlews and green-eyed treefrogs as well as thousands of plants and millions of microbes.

The overall response to the program from landholders in the region has been very positive. The common purpose uniting those who are applying to join seems to be a strong desire to demonstrate their commitment to nature conservation by displaying the Land for Wildlife sign. So look out for those green diamonds. To find out how to get one for yourself contact:

Land for Wildlife
Regional Coordinator

Kay Dorricott
North Qld Afforestation
Phone: 07 4041 2593.

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