



## February 2015

Welcome to the first issue of Streamlines for 2015. Once again we have an interesting (well, at least I think they are!) and varied collection of articles.

We begin with the second instalment of Daniel Rekdahl’s report on the PPCG walk through Pullenvale Forest Park last year. A similar event is being planned for later in the year. Watch out for it!

Next, Margaret O’Grady has prepared an informative item on waders, their migration patterns and threats to their future. This article is illustrated with Margaret’s own photographs.

Amanda Maggs summarises the Community Conservation Assistance projects in Pullen Pullen Catchments. Amanda and Louise Orr prepared articles on two of the target weeds – cat’s claw creeper and Madeira vine - for the February 2014 edition of Streamlines. A newly-released biological control agent for Madeira Vine is also described.

Brian Dean entertains us with a unique view of Bushcare in Part V of his Concise Pictorial History of Bushcare while Irene Darlington, our Wildlife Officer, reports on the effects of weather on our wildlife.

Many thanks to all our contributors. We wouldn’t have a newsletter without you! All members are invited to contribute by sending items/comments/news to [editor@pullenpullencatchment.org.au](mailto:editor@pullenpullencatchment.org.au).

Helen Ogle  
Editor

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**Pullen Pullen Catchments Group**  
A Landcare Group

## Pullen Pullen Catchments Group



Meetings are held at 7pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre, 250 Grandview Road, Pullenvale.

## **Working Bees**

Anstead Bushland Reserve – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month, 8.30 - 11 am.

Pullenvale Forest Park – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month, 8.30 – 11 am.

All tools, gloves, etc are provided at Working Bees. Just wear sturdy boots, tough clothes and bring water and a hat!

## **Committee Members 2015**

<b>President:</b>	John Ness	3202 7556	president@pullenpullencatchment.org.au
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"The PPCG acknowledges the support of the Brisbane City Council for costs associated with the website, the printing of Streamlines and with running the working bee mornings in Anstead Bushland Reserve and Pullenvale Forest Park."

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## **Membership Options:**

*Membership fees are:*

- *Annual Membership – \$10 per person payable on March 1 each year*
- *Life Membership – \$100 per person*

*We are delighted to accept donations.*

- Send a cheque payable to PPCG to PO Box 1390, Kenmore, 4069 or*
- Transfer the funds electronically to BSB 064 152, Account No.10107038 Ref: your name.*

# NEWS

Our most exciting news is that Pullenvale Forest Park has a new Bushcare Coordinator. Lynn Brown has stepped up to the plate and led a great Working Bee on Sunday February 8. We began working along the creek near the picnic area at the entrance to the Park, removing tall grass, weeds and vines growing over trees and shrubs. It was very rewarding to see the native plants underneath emerge from their cloak of unwanted greenery. Hopefully, we will be able to show you 'before' and 'after' pictures in the next issue of Streamlines. Lynn is following on the great work of clearing this Park for public access and enjoyment carried out under Dean Beaumont's leadership. There is always room for more volunteers at **Working Bees scheduled for March 8, April 12 and May 10**. It's worth coming just for the great morning tea!

Going back now to our Annual Meeting in December and news emerging from that:-

- Ray Krafft is stepping down from the role of Bushcare Coordinator at Anstead Bushland Reserve after 10 years. A very big thank you, Ray, for the hard work you have put in, not just at Working Bees but in between times, too. Nola and Brian Dean are jointly taking over management of Anstead for 2015. **Working Bees are scheduled for March 22, April 26 and May 24**. Once again, more volunteers are most welcome and the morning tea is worth the effort beforehand! Brian is investigating the purchase of a suitable trailer to replace Ray's trailer for use at Anstead.
- Our President, John Ness, pointed out that 2014 was relatively low key in comparison to previous years because the hot, dry weather limited planting, only Anstead was active for the whole year, no major grants for new bushcare work were received, commencement of the Caring for Country project was delayed and there is only a small number of active volunteers.
- On the positive side, John reported that the Website is being rebuilt with a lot more information about the environment, plants, animals and activities in the catchments for members and the public.
- PPCG retained a solid financial base with no major expenditure and a small grant from the Brisbane City Council to cover some operational costs.
- The Caring for Country project in Anstead Bushland Reserve and possibly Airlie Road Reserve should start in 2015.
- John Wilson Park on Glenhurst St, Pinjarra Hills has been nominated as an area that would benefit from the Green Army program.
- The Brisbane City Council has not supported the idea of building a bird hide in Anstead Bushland Reserve. John will approach Margaret de Wit to see if she can possibly help with the application to build a bird hide.
- The current membership structure is quite cumbersome and not particularly suitable for the new website so in future there will be only two membership categories – Annual Memberships renewable on March 1 each year for \$10 per person and Life Memberships costing \$100 per person.

In response to unpublicised and backwards changes in some Queensland environmental laws, PPCG has registered with the Environmental Defenders Office Queensland. EDOs of Australia is a national network of environmental lawyers who help people to use the law to protect the environment. They provide legal advice and representation, legal education and policy and law reform advice

There have been some changes of personnel since last year. Simon Fox has replaced Kate Flink as our Habitat Brisbane Officer. He comes with great recommendations and has already proved very approachable and helpful with guidance for Pullenvale Forest Park. Mandy Maggs, our Creek Catchment Officer, has taken a 12-month role with the Land for Wildlife Program and has been replaced.

Following on from the article on Ticks in the last issue of Streamlines, Louise Orr has drawn my attention to a recent Catalyst program on ticks. Check out <http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/4177191.htm> for a video download.



There were some signs of damage by deer. Male deer had removed the bark from one sapling by rubbing it with their antlers. The sapling was clearly not going to survive.

At a spot that was once impenetrable glycine and where all the trees present had been planted by the catchment group, cryptocarya with its discolourous foliage (upper and lower surfaces differ in colour), celery wood, lilly pillies and young monkey ropes are now present. A tulip satinwood tree has been severely damaged but is re-shooting. However, it will probably never fulfil its role as a canopy tree. Native grapes (*Cissus antarcticus*) are present, too. Their fruit are quite toxic but it is a good sign to see it overgrowing balloon vine on a lilly pilly.

Vines again. Madeira vine is notoriously difficult to control because of the aerial tubers, sometimes called potatoes, that it forms. The milky sap means it is often difficult to control with poisons. A biological control agent has recently been released (see page 10 for more details). Fortunately, madeira vine is only present in restricted areas in our catchments and these are related to ease of dispersal and the presence of vectors to spread the tubers. A second vine in this area is climbing poinciana which came here many years ago either as a garden plant or as a contaminant in other material. It has very hard seeds that survive for a long time in the seed bank.



Discolorous leaves of *Cryptocarya*



Foliage and fruit of Native Grape



Foliage and aerial tubers of Madeira Vine

Two other plants that probably don't qualify as vines but do grow over other vegetation occur here. One is tradescantia. The second is a purple-leaved succulent, *Callisia*, which probably arrived in this area in an earlier flood. These are the last weeds that should be removed during regeneration of bushland areas. They suppress the growth of other weeds and can be reasonably easily removed by persistent raking until they are no longer present.

We next paused on an old river terrace where there were a number of interesting plants. *Ficus fraseri*, a sandpaper fig, is holding the bank of the creek in place with its great buttress roots. This tree exhibits a common feature of tropical rainforest plants – flowers and following fruit are borne along the trunk and branches rather than in flower heads at the ends of the branches (cauliflory, ramiflory). Figs are great fruit producers and fruit on the stems are readily available to fruit-eating animals. The native tamarind, a rainforest pioneer that stays on in the mature forest, small leaf tamarind and young cryptocarya were also present. Across the creek, a diamond leaf pittosporum, *Auranticarpa rhombifolia*, was glowing with golden fruit, a great resource for fruit-eating birds. Smaller plants very effectively holding the bank with their roots here included Lomandra, an introduced papyrus and even a banana (both the latter probably washed down in floods). Red-orange roots along the creek bank are cocksbur vine.

As we moved into the drier areas of the park, the vegetation changed towards dry sclerophyll forest. Leucaena was present as was prickly acacia. Prickly acacia was probably in Australia before European settlement. It is not a major problem here although it is a weed in drier areas. Eucalypts became more abundant. Grey ironbark, narrow-leaved ironbark, forest red gum/blue gum, grey gum and grey ironbark are present. Forest red gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) is one of the dominants in the area and its old branch stubs are dying back forming nesting hollows for animals. One of the ironbarks was surrounded by a curtain of cocksbur, a thorny native fig that produces abundant edible fruit.

Another plant in this area producing abundant fruit was the lilly pilly, *Syzygium australe*. Nearby was an *Austromyrtus* plant infected with myrtle rust. This fungus has been in Australia for about 2½ years and



eventually die.



Fruit of *Ficus fraseri*



Fruit of *Auranticarpa rhombifolia*

Another interesting plant found in this area was *Abrus precatorius*, an introduced plant that has bright red seeds with black tips. The seeds are very attractive and have been used in necklaces but they are also very toxic and have been used in India in assassinations, prompting one of the party to ask 'Do they grow in Canberra?' The seeds are very consistent in weight (11.6 grams) and were used in India to weigh gold.



Myrtle rust on *Agonis flexuosa*



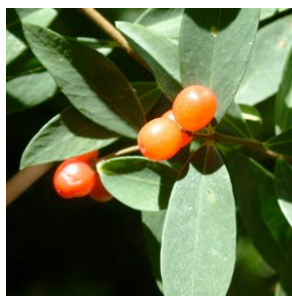
*Abrus precatorius* fruit

As we moved back towards the rainforest, we encountered bootlace bush, *Wikstroemia indica*, in the family Thymeleaceae. The early settlers nicked the bark at an appropriate height and pulled it down forming a tough, long-wearing bootlace. Bootlace bush grows in the ecotone (transition zone) between rainforest and dry sclerophyll forest. It produces yellow-green flowers followed by red berries which are enjoyed by birds.

Another plant that caused great interest here was the wide-leaved native cherry, *Exocarpos latifolius*, which is a close relative of *E. cupressiformis*, the native cherry found in eucalypt forests. Both belong in the Sandalwood family and are hemi-parasites relying, especially in their younger stages, on eucalypt roots for food, water and nutrients. Their fruit is the swollen receptacle of the flower with the seed on the end – another example for early Europeans of how upside down Down Under is! The seeds are hard to germinate because of the need to establish the parasitic relationship.



Flowers of bootlace bush



Fruit of bootlace bush



Foliage and fruit of wide-leaved native cherry

The walk finished with a delicious morning tea back at the picnic area.



A summer visit to anywhere around the Moreton Bay shores usually includes seeing waders, otherwise known as shorebirds. They are beautiful, delicately formed creatures built for long flight with plumage in a range of soft browns blending with the beach sand. Why are their numbers almost non-existent over the cooler months?? Well, these little guys are amazing travellers.

There are approximately 50 species of waders that occur on our shores and only 10 of those are permanent residents. Most of the other 40 species are migrants from the northern hemisphere. They make remarkable long-distance (13000-20000 km) seasonal migrations and face numerous threats to their survival during these marathon journeys. These amazing journeys follow the same route each season and these are called 'flyways'.



Red-necked Stint  
Image by Margaret O'Grady



Bar-tailed Godwit  
Image by Margaret O'Grady

Flyways are broad corridors used by migrating birds. For waders (shorebirds) eight flyways have been defined in the world. Three flyways are important for migratory waders in the Asia Pacific region and these are, (from East to West), the Central Pacific, the East Asian-Australasian, and the Central Asian Flyways.

These flyways include stopovers where the birds land and rest during the flight and are of vital importance to the success of the migrations. The map below illustrates the extreme importance of the Chinese coastline as a stopover location on northward migration. For the larger waders (such as the Far Eastern Curlew) the Yellow Sea coastline is of particular importance.

A growing problem affecting the success of the yearly migration both north and south bound is that the regular stopover sites are becoming more populated and polluted. The Chinese Coast line is a fast growing area of urban development and there are no longer as many areas where the birds can safely land and feed. Another area that has been lost as a stopover is at Saemangeum, South Korea, where construction of a 33km seawall has converted 40,000 hectares of prime estuarine habitat into dry land. The University of Queensland is involved in research (led by Dr Richard Fuller) to understand these issues more fully and work towards establishing safe and viable stopovers.

There are a number of other groups working globally to address these issues and Australia is involved in three agreements that are actively followed up with meetings between governments every 2 years. The three agreements are JAMBA (Japan/Australia Migratory Bird Agreement), CAMBA (China/Australia Migratory Bird Agreement) and ROKAMBA (Republic of Korea/Australia Migratory Bird Agreement).

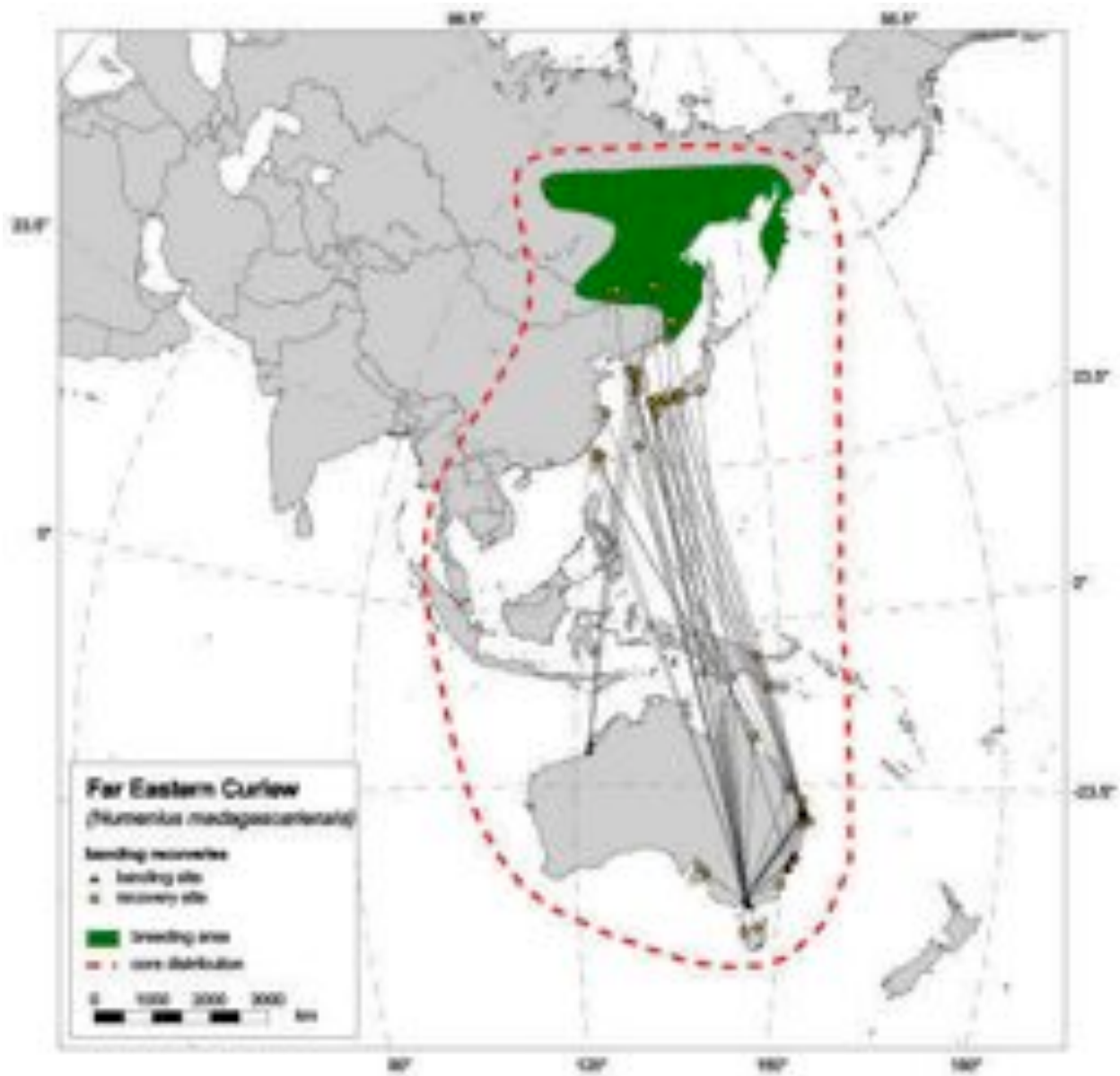
The map below is specifically for the Far Eastern Curlew but most of the waders that migrate from Moreton Bay follow a similar flyway but with variations across species. Also some species use different routes, stopover locations and migration strategies on northward versus southward migration. It also shows banding sites where organizations such as Birds Queensland and some other research groups band birds and follow/record their activities to better understand their habits.

The waders arrive in Moreton Bay in early summer depleted of fat and energy and spend several months eating and resting in preparation for the trip north and breeding in the northern summer. They increase

which are born in Siberia, fly south in their first year taking a few weeks longer than their parents to make the journey but then spend a few years in Australia before heading north for their first breeding season.

An effective way to observe and enjoy waders is to visit a roost at high tide and sit quietly. There are a number of roosts around Moreton Bay and the Birds Queensland website has information about each one.

Some of this information is adapted from <http://www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2010/02/bird-migration-becoming-more-hazardous>.



Map illustrating the flyway of the Far Eastern Curlew

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## Waterways Activation Maps

Brisbane City Council has recently released what it calls Waterways Activation Maps designed 'to help nature lovers learn about local creek catchments, the fauna and flora found there and the many ways to enjoy the great outdoors in their local area'. They supposedly showcase 'creek and river catchments, associated creek catchment groups, boat ramps, selected bikeways, walking paths and trails for the community to experience'. I found our map extremely hard to find, unreadable and even harder to use finding no useful information at all. However, I did find a 'Know Your Creek' fact sheet on Pullen Pullen Creek Catchment that provided interesting information about the natural assets, land uses, fauna, flora and restoration of Pullen Pullen Creek Catchment. I'm keen to hear about your experiences with the site.





# Catchments

Amanda Maggs

Brisbane City Council's Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCA) provides support and assistance to enable private landholders, individuals and community groups to play an important role protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of Brisbane City.

CCA enables groups and individuals within Council's Community Conservation Partnerships Program (CCPP) to undertake environmental restoration or rehabilitation work that delivers weed management outcomes. This includes the Habitat Brisbane Program, Catchment Groups and private landholders who are members of the Wildlife Conservation Partnerships program (Land for Wildlife). The intent is to allow Council and community environment groups to collaboratively deliver projects within priority biodiversity areas that would otherwise be difficult for groups or individuals to undertake.

Since the program's launch in 2012, CCA has supported three rounds of funding and distributed up to \$600,000 each year to successful applicants across the three programs. In the first two years of funding, ten CCA projects were successfully completed in Pullenvale, Anstead and Moggill. In the current round, four CCA projects will be rolled out in the local area. In the Pullen Pullen Catchments, CCA projects mostly occur on Land for Wildlife properties and Habitat Brisbane bushcare sites, with a focus on the control of *Lantana camara*, *Lantana montevidensis*, Ochna and weed vine species.



*Lantana camara*



*Lantana montevidensis*



Ochna

If you would like to find out more about what assistance and support is available for landholders to undertake weed control on their properties please contact Council's Community Conservation Partnerships Program: [ccofficers@brisbane.qld.gov.au](mailto:ccofficers@brisbane.qld.gov.au).

## A CONCISE PICTORIAL HISTORY OF BUSHCARE

### Part Five : *The 100 Years' War on Weeds*

#### A medieval bushcare group rides forth

Armed with primitive but deadly brushhooks, machetes and an early form of whipper-snipper, Albrecht Dürer's Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse symbolically slaughter the armies of invasive weeds (represented, appropriately enough, as peasants). The central figure carries a balance used to measure out quantities of Herbicide, or 'Weedsbane' as it was then known.

Mounted working bees were highly successful, and could destroy vast quantities of just about anything. There is some talk about reviving this type of working group, with, of course, upgraded safety gear and protective clothing. (The figure at left, on a Pale Horse, would never get past a Health and Safety check these days – no wonder he looks like death!) The winged figure at the top is thought to be a Tea Lady following the team with refreshments.



Brian Dean



# The Weather and Wildlife

Irene Darlington

Well, whether you believe in climate change or not (I do..), you have to admit strange things are happening with our environment and consequently our wildlife.

I had never seen native birds nesting all year around. I have now. The seasons seem to have a less defined distinction between them. Some of the native birds gather little branches to nest with later into Autumn and earlier into Spring. Hardly any difference now for them. Of course when the babies hatch, food availability may be very limited – lack of blossom and thus the lack of nectar, pollen, insects etc. Everything depends on everything in our environment....

As a very busy wildlife carer, there are some very frightening things we wildlife carers get to see. One huge issue is the temperature getting warmer and warmer. We are talking about those high 30s temperatures. It gets so unbearably hot, we have a problem with animals coming in with 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns to their hands, feet and underside of tails. How tragic! As the sun goes down on days like these hot weather occurrences, the power and telephone lines are sizzling hot as the possums come out of the trees to traverse them at dusk. As with us, their soles conduct heat very poorly, so they don't realize they are hurting from burnt hands and feet until it's too late to prevent the burns.



Healing burns on the foot of a ringtail possum



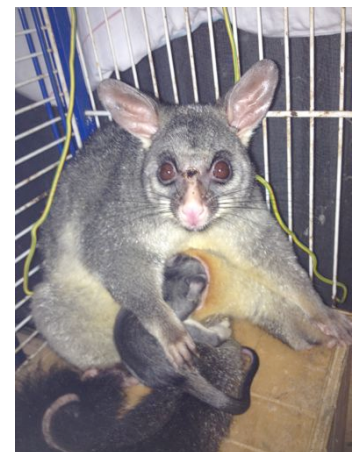
Baby brushtail possum asleep on my chest – orphaned after mum fell with burnt feet from the power lines and broke her back

Initially the injury doesn't look too terrible on their little hand and foot pads, but within a few days, they are a swollen, pulsating and peeling mess. Painful and open to infection. The possums can't feed as they can't climb. They become vulnerable as they start to scrounge food on the ground. It's so sad, but this is the point where so many are found curled up at the base of a tree or a wall, under your car or other areas, hiding and in pain. Starving, emaciated, dehydrated, full of parasites.

They are save-able in many cases. We just have to get them into care fast and work with antibiotic creams, natural ones like Paw Paw ointment or Medihoney preferably. The healing process is very slow, but we just persevere.

I can never recall temperatures so hot that these types of burns become common in possums. The vets can't either. It's frightening. It's also a lot of work and expensive caring for wildlife carers. We have to keep that possum until the burnt skin sloughs off and new skin is strong enough to withstand climbing rough trees. Of course nothing guarantees the poor possum hasn't lost its territory already to another possum or that your healed possum won't traverse the hot wires the very next night and end up worse than before. All very possible. Possums are creatures of habit...

So what can we do? Well, first of all, if you see a possum out in daylight, he is not just having a walk. Something is wrong. If you see a possum sleeping curled up in your pot plant or at the base of a tree, again something is wrong. These behaviours are very uncommon for possums



A brushtail mum and her baby in care. Brushtail possums traverse the hot power lines as well and suffer as much as ringtails from burns



and they need help from us before a cat or dog can get to them on the ground. Don't just leave the animals there. Throw a towel over them and pop them into a box or cat carry basket. Anything other than leaving them there. Then get hold of a wildlife carer for directions about where to take the possum.

So let's help our wildlife. Don't forget to leave trees that connect branches in your yard. I even have tree branches stretched between trees and shrubs so the wild possums in my yard don't have to get on the ground at all and just traverse the trees and branches between them.

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## Biological Control Agent for Madeira Vine

Helen Ogle

Recently, a leaf-eating beetle from South America, *Plectonycha correntina*, has been released into severe infestations of Madeira Vine in south-east Queensland and New South Wales in the hope that it will control this weed which is difficult to control by other means.

Host specificity testing of *Plectonycha correntina* began in 2008 to determine if it would spread to and damage other species. Thirty seven species related to Madeira Vine were tested. Fortunately the beetle is quite specific in its host range, feeding and surviving only on Madeira Vine and Malabar Spinach, both members of the Family Basellaceae. While the beetles can survive on Malabar Spinach, it is a poorer host and the colony will not survive past one generation.

The adult female beetle lays small yellowish eggs in groups of 8-15 on the undersides of leaves. Larvae emerge after about 5 days and, still in a group, feed on the undersides of leaves. They cover themselves with a sticky black gelatinous substance. After about 14 days, the larvae leave their black coverings behind and move towards the ground. They emerge from the black covering as 3-4 mm long white to yellow grubs with black heads. The larvae pupate in the ground and emerge as adult beetles about 20 days later. Adult beetles are approximately 5.2 mm long and 2.1 mm wide. They have a reddish brown back and wing covers which may also have black spots. The adults are found on the underside of leaves from which they easily drop off when disturbed. Female beetles live between 75-115 days and on average lay 550 eggs. The life cycle takes 42-52 days.

Both larvae and adult beetles feed on the foliage of Madeira Vine. Adult beetles remove parts of the mesophyll (internal tissue) of the leaf which leaves scars similar to 'windows' on the leaves. Mature larvae remove whole sections of the leaves causing margin damage as well as rounded holes all over the leaves. Resulting leaf damage and defoliation reduces the plant's capacity to produce and store energy, eventually reducing its capacity to reproduce.



Eggs of *Plectonycha correntina*



Larvae of *Plectonycha correntina*



Fully-grown beetle

Photos: Biodiversity Australia