BREMER CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

February 2017

Special points of interest:

Next BCA Operational Meeting 16th February 2017

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around the bremer

President's Message by Bill Steentsma

Reading a business article headline "We are here for you in the year ahead". Sounds great and I like to say same on behalf of BCA. These are promises and encouraging words for our Members and landholders who have BCA's objectives at heart. This counts also for the Bremer Catchment with its positive and negative environmental issues. I wish you all a year of personal and professional fulfilment in 2017.

This is our first Newsletter issue for the year. Sometimes, our Newsletter editor Marianne asks me for more topics, hearing:"You know all environmental topics and how to fix them"! Ahem, may I suggest receiving some help or suggestions from our Members?

The Ipswich Boys Grammar School (a BCA Member) was again involved with their 'Water Monitoring' as part of their curriculum. Their reports about the project were very impressive. BCA's horiba was used for the exercise. My wish is that the School has a representative at our meetings.

Great news! The container we purchased has been delivered and Brian and Gary checked it out. This will give BCA the opportunity to have all equipment in one place. The container is placed on the Scouts property in North Ipswich and we have received written approval for the placement.

BCA will organise a Working Bee with Members to place all equipment in the container and invite the local media for some publicity.

Bill Steentsma

MYRTLE RUST by Brian Pepperall

Rust on Pinterest

Myrtle Rust on shrubs and trees

Myrtle rust - a threat to the Australian landscape and plant industries

One of the latest introduced diseases of plants in Australia is myrtle rust. It's been around for a few years. I've seen it in the Mt Coot-tha Botanical Gardens among other places. It is a potential problem in Australia because it is a disease of the Myrtle botanical family, which includes a lot of native trees and shrubs.

I have a wide variety of native plants in my garden, from open forest types to rainforest types, most of which are in the Myrtle family. In my situation it seems that only two plants are susceptible to rust attack - *Eugenia reinwardtiana* and *Rhodamnia sessiliflora*. I have many species of *Eugenia/Syzygium*, often side by side with *reinwardtiana,* and the rust does not transfer. It has also possibly affected the leaves of *Austromyrtus* species. The *Eugenia* is most at risk. The rust affects the new growth and the flowers and fruit. You can lose all new growth and all the flowers, as well as any fruit which may have been on the bush. This is a bit of a nuisance because of all of the *Eugenia/Syzygium* types there are, *reinwardtiana* has the nicest tasting fruit and produces an abundance of it. The *Rhodamnia* ends up with ugly distorted leaves. I have also seen rust on some of the large fruited overseas *Eugenia/Syzygium.*

Since I like the *reinwardtiana* so much, I decided to do something to stop the infestation. Surprisingly, the thing that seems to work for me is a pool sanitiser, Alginox, with the active ingredient benzalkonium chloride (150 g/L). On a few occasions I have combined it with copper oxychloride.

The sanitiser seems to kill the rust on contact, but inevitably some spores get missed and it comes back again. Spraying at weekly intervals for 2 - 3 weeks seems to work and if you inspect your plants regularly you can usually spot small patches before they spread. In this way I have been able to save nearly all new growth, flowers and fruit lately, and do not have to worry so much about the problem. Whether or not I can eliminate it is yet to be seen.

The sanitiser is mixed at 1 - 2 mls/litre of water in a five litre pressure sprayer. I do not guarantee it will work in all situations but if you have the problem it may be worth a try. The sanitiser is often used as a preventative in the cultivation of ornamental plants such as orchids.

Callistemon 'Harkness' bottlebrush infested with myrtle rust

Farming together.

A resource for primary producers to help you value-add, build marketplace strength and boost returns

News of grants, funding, scholarships and opportunities to take your ag innovations further ... compiled by **Farming Together**, the Australian Government program boosting farmer groups.

RESOURCE FOR START-UPS AND SMEs

The Community Investment Handbook is a very useful – and free – resource from the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals. The council's CEO Melina Morrison is on our industry advisory group. For small groups thinking of forming co-ops, the new handbook is a 'go-to' document. It showcases methods of financing and is available free on **Get Mutual**. You can read a Pro Bono article on it **here**. This follows a **report by the Australian Farm Institute** which says Australia's agriculture sector needs more capital-raising options than bank loans, overdrafts or mortgage debt, if it is to meet growing food production demands.

IMB FOUNDATION FUNDS OPEN

IMB Community Foundation offers between $1K and $30K to encourage economic, social and environmental diversification. Deadline 5pm, 24 February, 2017. **More? http://www.imb.com.au/community-community-foundation-about-the-foundation.html**

FARMING TOGETHER TALKS FUNDING FOR AG GROUPS

A free seminar at Toowoomba on February 21 will feature the project director of Farming Together, Lorraine Gordon. She will be joining speakers at the Investment in Agriculture Forum 2017. This an opportunity for agribusinesses to gain a comprehensive understanding of what is required to become investor-ready, and develop an understanding of the range of investment models and strategies available. The venue is the Burke and Wills Hotel, starting time is 9.30am for 10am and seats are limited. More?

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Hello all BCA Members

This is just a reminder that the membership for 2016/2017 is overdue. Can you please bring it to the next meeting to be held on 16th February 2017

Healthy Waterways and Catchments News

Catchment soon to see relief from brute weed

Devils Fig

Lowland subtropical rainforest in the Upper Mudgeeraba catchment, classified as Critically Endangered in Australia, will soon see relief from a dense woody weed which has been plaguing the area. The Devils Fig is suspected of poisoning local species and causing injuries to animals and people. Thanks to funding from the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines, and the Australian Department of Environment and Energy, the upcoming restoration project will rehabilitate large areas ravaged by Devils Fig.

Devils Fig is an introduced species from Central America, easily spread via birds and water. A rapid and aggressive grower, Devils Fig is highly invasive and can substantially alter waterway environments. In doing so, it displaces native plants and changes the habitat of many animals.

Restoration works, which started in October 2016, will remove Devils Fig during its flowering season (late-spring and early summer) to prevent established individuals setting seed.

Healthy Waterways and Catchments CEO, Ms Julie McLellan said that "recovering Critically Endangered rainforest in the Gold Coast hinterland is vital to sustaining the habitats for many native plants and animals, some of which are classified as endangered themselves."

"Species under threat by the influx of Devils Fig include the native macadamia, spiny crayfish, cascade tree frog, the Richmond Birdwing butterfly and its host vine."
"This strategic project is aiming to remove Devils Fig in the headwaters of Mudgeeraba Creek. By doing so, it will prevent the spread and proliferation of this exotic weed downstream. This is just one of the many projects that we are implementing to help us to protect and enhance natural assets on behalf of the Queensland community" Ms McLellan said.

Local landholder and President of the Gold Coast Catchment Association, Wal Mayr is excited to see the development of the project.

Wal Mayr said "This vital investment enhances the conservation value of World Heritage Springbrook National Park and also compliments the work being carried out on adjoining City of Gold Coast Conservation Reserves and Private Nature Refuges."

"It is the last piece of the puzzle for one of the largest areas of conserved land in the Gold Coast Hinterland."

The project comes after extensive consultation with local landholders, the Gold Coast Catchment Association, City of Gold Coast Natural Area Management Unit, and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

If you are interested in learning more about this restoration project, please contact **Healthy Waterways and Catchments Southern Area Manager,**

Does Extreme Heat Affect Farm Animals?

The frequency of exceptionally hot years is expected to continue across Australia in years to come, which means that consecutive days of extreme temperatures (heat waves) will not be uncommon.

Under normal conditions, farm animals maintain their body temperature at a relatively constant level by employing strategies that balance heat production with heat loss (for example, shivering will produce heat whereas panting will help the animal lose heat). This exchange is best achieved in the so-called thermo neutral zone – a temperature range in which the rate of heat production and heat loss is in equilibrium. Different animals have different thermo neutral zones (approximate figures):

Beef cattle (British breeds) 15 – 25°C
Beef cattle (tropical breeds) 16 – 17°C
Dairy cattle 5 – 20°C

During extremely high temperatures, an animal will struggle to lose excess body heat through evaporation. The situation is exacerbated if humidity is high or there is no breeze. Tell-tale signs of heat stress will appear: panting, increased respiration rate, increased drinking, loss of appetite and lethargy. Certain animals are more vulnerable to heat stress, including young, sick, heavily pregnant, dark coated, and heavy animals.

Heat stress can be prevented by providing animals with plenty of shade and fresh, cool water. Animals housed indoors should have well ventilated facilities with plenty of space for all animals to lie down.

Handling (including mustering and husbandry procedures) or transporting animals must be avoided in extreme heat and planned for the cooler parts of the day.
Taking proactive measure to prevent heat stress will help protect the animal's welfare during periods of extreme heat.

Cattle looking for shade during hot days

When all the trees are gone
A little help is appreciated

Managing Farm Water Supplies

Overview of farm water planning

Water is an essential requirement for running a livestock and cropping business and has a significant impact upon stock welfare, farm productivity and business profitability.

Knowledge of stock drinking water requirements and potential sources of water are important for planning on both an annual and daily basis.

The goal of farm water planning is to have the water you need, where you need it, when you need it. Farm water planning also takes into account the levels of risk associated with water supply reliability.

Essential elements of farm water planning include:

- understanding total farm water requirements
- evaluating the reliability of water sources
- determining the sizes of storages (dams or tanks) needed
- matching stocking rates to water availability
- designing farm water supply and reticulation systems
- determining how long water supplies will last during times of prolonged dry conditions.

Stock water shortages can be a significant limitation to productivity. A lack of water can mean destocking the property or carting water in, while poor water quality can restrict the type of stock run or inhibit their productivity.

From :Managing Water Supplies Booklet [PDF File - 433.6 KB]

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