

NORTH COAST LOCAL LAND SERVICES SMALL GRANT SUCCESS

A lot of the steep country in the hills to the north of Lismore was planted out to bananas during the last century. The fertile basaltic soils and the moist climate provided ideal conditions for the production of this crop. But over time fertility declined, yields dropped and the plantations were abandoned leading to the establishment of weeds like Lantana, Camphor Laurel, Molasses Grass and Crofton weed.

It is possible to restore these abandoned banana slopes to their former forested condition. It takes hard work and patience but the results can be very rewarding. In addition assistance with the regeneration process can be obtained via grants promoted by various government and other organisations.

Leigh Davison is a retired university lecturer who spends approximately three days per week doing bush regeneration work on the 102 ha multiple occupancy community at The Channon where he has lived for the past 35 years. Leigh had been struggling with a particularly difficult former banana slope when he heard about a small grant scheme being offered by the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (now North Coast Local Land Services) through this newsletter. He was successful in obtaining a grant that has paid for a team of three professional bush regenerators from the Lismore based EnviTE Environment to spend four days on the project. To get the grant Leigh committed to working alongside the team and to do follow-up weeding on the project site for the following four years. Without this commitment to follow-up weeding, restoration projects like this can go backwards in no time whatsoever.

“The work is predominantly directed towards weed removal,” says Leigh. “There is no need to plant trees as we invariably see massive germination and recruitment of a variety of native trees, shrubs and ground covers once the primary weed cover is removed. Watching and assisting the newly emerged vegetation is extremely satisfying. The plants grow incredibly quickly because the soil fertility has recovered after 50 years under lantana. I also get a buzz from discovering old artefacts from the banana growing days and restoring the access tracks that the banana growers imposed on the landscape.”



Iain Stych (left), leader of the EnviTE bush regeneration team and Leigh Davison on site on the regenerating banana slope.
Photo supplied by Leigh Davison

UPCOMING GRANTS AND FUNDING

Yates Junior Landcare Creative Gardening Grants 2014

Yates and Junior Landcare are encouraging schools to get creative in the garden. In celebration of the 25 years that Landcare Australia has been working with the Landcare community, Yates is proud to award 25 grants of up to \$1,000 each to schools and youth groups who can demonstrate innovative ways of creating a garden within their school or community. Grants will be awarded to the most innovative, sustainable and environmentally conscious entries. **For more information go to** <http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au/grants-2/yates-creative-gardening-grants>

Planting the Future Grants

We have been working with the Landcare community for the last 25 years, building a generation of Landcarers. To celebrate this milestone and to help facilitate the next generation of Landcarers, **25 grants of up to \$1,000** will be awarded to successful recipients who can implement Junior Landcare projects that demonstrate Landcare's commitment to protecting, restoring and sustainably managing Australia's natural environment and its productivity. **For more information go to** <http://www.juniorlandcare.com.au/plantingfuture>

GER Landcare Grants

We are pleased to announce that the GER Landcare Grants Program is now open for applications. The 2014/15 program has \$100,000 available to fund connectivity projects in priority focus areas in the NSW section of the GER corridor. Successful projects will receive funding of between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Please visit: <http://www.ger.org.au/how-we-deliver/ger-grants-program/landcare-grants-program> for more information.

There are some slight changes to the grants guidelines and application form this year so please review these carefully before applying. **Application deadline:** 2pm Monday, 15 June 2014

FeralScan Website

The FeralScan website (www.feralscan.org.au) has recently been upgraded to provide some better facilities for you, and improve the way pest animals and their impacts can be mapped.

A new community group facility is available, allowing you to create or join a Group within FeralScan, and share your data with other group members. This could be useful to Landcare groups, landholder networks, local council pest control groups, etc. As you know, it is far more cost-effective to work with your neighbours and your community to map and control pest animals, than to work alone.

Go to www.feralscan.org.au to find out more information.

The Invasive Animals CRC has also released an iPhone App "Field Guide to Pest Animals" (Apple iOS devices only at this stage). The App contains species profiles for 53 of Australia's worst pest animals. It contains profiles, photo galleries, animal footprints, animal calls, pest control resources, etc. Find out more at <http://www.feral.org.au/mobile-phone-apps/> or download the app from App Store.

Bathing Birds

National Parks Association of NSW in conjunction with Bird Life Australia and the University of Sydney are pleased to announce our new citizen science programme "Bathing Birds".

We would like to invite you to be a part of Bathing Birds. To get involved, all you need is a bird bath that you can monitor for a few days across a two week period at the end of June (dates TBD) and enter sightings and information about your garden on our data portal www.bathingbirds.org.au. If you would like to take part, please send me an email at grainnec@npansw.org.au to register your interest.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event or Workshop	Location	For more information and to RSVP
Thursday June 5 9-12 noon	Koala Habitat Restoration Field Day	Bodhi Tree Forest Monastery, 78 Bentley Road, Tullera	Bookings essential. RSVP Georgina Jones on 6627 2844 or georginaj@envite.org.au
Thursday 26 June 10am -3pm	Compost and Soil Health Workshop	Lismore Council Recycling and Recovery Centre Wyrallah Rd Lismore	RSVP by 19 th June to Virginia Brunton 0438496834 or Virginia.brunton@dpi.nsw.gov.au
Saturday 28 June 9am-12:30pm	Seed Propagation Workshop	Kyogle Landcare Nursery	Bookings essential, RSVP to Tara 66323722 or info@niss.com.au
Friday 25 th July 9-12noon	Wompoo Gorge Restoration Field Day	Meet at the end of Upper Cooper Creek Road	For further details or to register for the workshop RSVP Georgina Jones on 6627 2844 or georginaj@envite.org.au

BOOKS ON SALE

Plants of the Forest Floor	\$22.00
Rainforest Trees and Shrubs	\$45.00
Rainforest Climbing Plants	\$35.00
Grasses of the North Coast of NSW	\$5.00
Restoring natural areas in Australia	\$40.00
Barks and Trunks 'Rainforest Trees of South-Eastern Australia' V1	\$45.00
Native Plant or Weed 1	\$20.00
Native Plant or Weed 2	\$24.00
Common Weeds of Subtropical Rainforest in Eastern Australia BSRG	\$25.00

If you are interested in getting any of these books posted please contact us for information on postage costs.

Who is Quentin?

In 2014, the Nature Conservation Trust of New South Wales (NCT) is commencing a new fundraising campaign, *Who is Quentin?* to protect Tiger Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*) habitat in NSW.

Our campaign aims to raise \$100k which will be used to secure areas of quoll habitat under private land conservation agreement, providing legally binding, in perpetuity protection of large areas of habitat that will support the ongoing conservation of this species.

The more people who know about our campaign, the more likely we are to achieve or exceed our target. There are a number of simple ways you can help support our campaign:

- Share our [Facebook updates](#)
- Distribute our [campaign flyer](#)
- Display our [Quentin the Quoll poster](#) in your office
- [Buy a Quentin the Quoll T-shirt](#) or [Adopt a quoll](#)
- [Make a donation](#)
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If you would like more information about the work of the NCT, you can contact us at info@nct.org.au or call 1300 330 717. Otherwise, find out Who is Quentin? at www.WhoisQuentin.com.au

Ornamental bananas – fruitless for you and a big risk for Australia’s banana industry



Ornamental and seeded banana plants may look pretty in your garden but they pose a serious threat to the banana industry and the environment.

“These plants can serve as hosts for a diverse range of pests and diseases, one of the most critical being Banana Bunchy Top virus which has the potential to wipe out the Australian banana industry,” says National Bunchy Top Project Manager, Mr David Peasley.

“Apart from that, as they thrive in our region, they have also been recognised for the potential weed threat to the rainforests and national parks of northern New South Wales and Far North Coast Weeds have been doing an excellent job over the past two years to educate the community about that danger.”

Mr Peasley said the environmental risks posed by ornamental and seeded bananas are clear as seeds can be spread by birds and animals and by people transplanting them from friends’ or family’s gardens. What is much harder to know is if the plants have Bunchy Top, something that often only a trained inspector can detect.

“The big problem is with the two ways the disease is spread – by infected aphids and transplanting – aphids can travel in the wind for many kilometres, while people can unknowingly spread the virus by giving friends suckers of their plants,” Mr Peasley said.

“That’s why it is in fact illegal to transplant banana plants in the region – to protect our banana growers’ livelihoods as well as home grown bananas from the spread of Bunchy Top.”

The Bunchy Top Zone in New South Wales is limited to an area north of Ballina, west to Lismore then up to the border. Most commercial banana plantations are now in the Tweed Shire Council area.

Whether you want to grow banana plants to eat or ornamentals to enhance your garden, every person must obtain a permit to move, plant or cultivate banana plants or planting material. Permits can be arranged through Mr Peasley on peasleyhort@bigpond.com or call the NSW Department of Primary Industries on 6626 1200 for further information.

For a free inspection contact the Bunchy Top Hotline on 1800 068 371, or for further information on Bunchy Top disease please visit www.bunchytop.org.au



Each ornamental banana can contain hundreds of seeds

Prepared by Northern Landcare Support Services for Landcare Groups & landholders in the Richmond & Upper Clarence Catchments. **All contributions to the newsletter are welcome.**

The articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of Northern Landcare Support Services or North Coast Local Land Services. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please contact us on **Northern Landcare Support Services** 02) 6632 3722 info@nlss.com.au