

Permaculture Cairns Inc. Established July, 2007 Incorporation Number IA35907
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Permaculture Cairns News

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Public Meetings of Permaculture Cairns take place every month except January. We have a great guest speaker every time, Feb-Nov. At the December meeting we have the AGM, and end-of-year Christmas party.

Meeting Format

- Invited Speaker
- Minutes from last meeting are reviewed to check progress on activities
- Plans for the upcoming weeks
- Plant of the month
- Shared meal & refreshments

Visitors welcome

\$5 suggested minimum donation

Next meeting - Monday 19th May 2008 @ 6pm

We've had a few different venues in recent months but thanks to one of our members, Darryl Hooper, we now have a fantastic central, family friendly venue at the **Cairns Saints AFL club rooms** for our meetings. The club rooms adjoin **Griffiths Park**, which is directly behind Sportsworld fitness center. The club rooms have wonderful facilities including a TV & DVD player, full bar, BBQ, children's playground and one of the best sunset views in Cairns.

To make the most of this we've decided to change the meeting time from 7pm to **6pm**, which we hope will encourage more people, especially families, to attend. A shared meal, whereby each person brings a plate of food to share (Pot Luck) will also be a regular part of our monthly get together from now on. More details later on.....

President's Report

Kym Kruse

April was another busy time for Permaculture Cairns with a number of events and many new members joining. Welcome to all our newest members, please make yourself at home, introduce yourselves to everyone and join in as many activities as you can.

This month we held a stall at the **TANKS Sunday Market Day** which was very well received and an invitation exists for us to be there every month. Thanks to Vic, Robert, Miyuki, Bruce, Georgie and Sara-Jane for their help on the day. We have also been invited to hold a stall at the "**Green Living Expo**" to be held at the **Cairns TAFE Campus on 18th May**, which is another opportunity for us to share Permaculture with the community. Hands up if you can help!

On **April 19th** we were invited to hold a **worm farming workshop** at **Machans Beach Community Garden**. Thanks to our advertising efforts, the workshop was extremely well attended and enjoyed by all that came. We showcased a number of different worm farm possibilities from zero cost to a commercial option that receives government rebates. Which ever way you go, the fact remains that having a worm farm is a fantastic way to energy cycle our so called organic "waste" and improve the condition, quality and water holding capacity of our precious soils. Composting worms can also provide us with a protein rich food for other livestock and great bait for fishing! A couple of other interesting points were raised at the workshop about weed barrier mats and the use of a powdery like substance called "Diatomaceous Earth".

Members News

Support the ongoing work of the group and enjoy the many benefits of becoming a member. Join Today!

\$20.00 Individual per year

\$30.00 Family per year

Next Workshop

When: Saturday 17th May

Time: 3pm

Where: 7 Solager St, Manoora

What: Permaculture Design

Our Vice President and highly qualified Permaculturist, Bruce Zell will run through the basic principles behind Permaculture Design enabling you to view your own place in a new light. Don't miss this opportunity!

What's coming up?

The **Tropical Garden Fair** is at **Cannon Park Turf Club** this year, on **Mothers Day, May 11th** and we are going to have a **HUGE** 81 sqm display there! Please support the group in the following ways:

- **Set up on Sat. May 10th**
- Helping out on the day
- Deconstructing the display after the event
- Loaning the group plants in pots for our display

Please call or email **Kym** if you can help in anyway. Thank you.

Newsflash!

Don't forget you can now nominate points for our group with **IGA @ Pease St.**

Welcome Members

The following people have become members of Permaculture Cairns. Thanks for your generous support.

Lydia Zambon & Julia Shodaya
The Pierce-Lyons Family
The Djatschenko Family
Sara-Jane Hart
Michael Hart
Carol Laing
Larry Haddock
Lenore Evans
Deborah Perfolotti
The Nicholas-Browning Family
Thea Terrell
Frank Burton
Rebecca O'Brien
Joanne Gunzburg
Beth Shorter
Andre Grant
The Browning Family
Murray Korff
Darryl Hooper
Alessia Mortari
The Virginie Family
Peter Wilkes
Bruce Zell
The Kruse Family
The Frijters Family
Sylvia Lewis

Both products are available commercially, however in Permaculture we always seek long term sustainable solutions derived from living resources as an alternative.

Constructing a raised bed garden, with a weed suppressant total of ten layers is one sure way to keep nut grass and alike from having the chance to poke through. The initial layers can consist of coconut, newspaper, cardboard and woodchips to do this. On top of which we layer manures, straw, lucerne, compost etc to provide nutrients for our growing plants.

One way to keep invasive weeds out is to plant a weed barrier. On the edge of our beds we can use: A deep rooted broadleaf - Comfrey, a clump grass, with no seed - Lemongrass, Vetiver grass, a carpeting plant - sweet potato, nasturtium, Impatiens, a dense / low shrub - Oncoba, Corposma, Echium and a bulb - Canna (Arrowroot) or Agapanthus (very tolerant). Outside this as support species/windbreak, we can use plants such as - pigeon pea, cassava, crotalaria, papaya, luecaena, bamboo, euphorbia and acacia. We are then able to keep out weeds and provide a year round source of mulch for our gardens. Weeds only grow where there is an available niche for them to do so. Fill the niche with something useful and weeds don't get a look in! In an orchard, pinto peanut is a great option as it provides nitrogen for your fruit trees as well as acting as a living ground cover.

Diatomaceous Earth (DE) is often used as a non-chemical pesticide. It is seen and regarded as safe to use because it doesn't work chemically but rather works due to its physico-sorptive properties. In short it dehydrates the insects, killing such things as grasshoppers overnight. Unfortunately, it doesn't discriminate between the insects we want to get rid of and the ones we want to keep. It will also knock off predatory beetles, millipedes, woodlice, dung flies and terrestrial worms, all of which are beneficial as they either contribute to decomposition and the recycling of nutrients or predate upon other insects. There are also valid health concerns for humans as depending on the crystalline silica content, (World Health Organization safety standard is 3% percent) inhaling DE can cause silicosis.

DE is also used to replace silica in tropical soils, since DE is the fossilized remains of diatoms (a type of hard-shelled algae), which contain 86% silica. A cheap, short term solution would be to use a small amount Calcium Silicate (concrete powder), however bamboo leaves used as mulch are an excellent source of Silicon and provide the only sustainable long term solution.....tree crops. If we consider the costs involved in mining, processing, packaging and transporting, using such products becomes an ethical question.

Remember, the choices we make do make a difference. Food for thought.

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