



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



NEWS RELEASE

20 February 2009

Students learn about the perfect coastal plants for their backyard

From the banana bush to the yellow mangrove - students from Saint Patrick's College will be pioneers in learning about coastal plant species when they take delivery of a coastal plants teaching kit on Monday.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) has teamed up with Burdekin Dry Tropics Natural Resource Management and Greening Australia to deliver coastal plant teaching kits to schools throughout the Burdekin Dry Tropics region.

This region covers a significant part of Queensland including Townsville, Charters Towers, Ayr, Ingham, Burdekin, Isaac, Barcaldine, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and the Whitsundays.

GBRMPA Reef Guardian Schools Project Officer Leonie Maddigan said almost 30 schools have signed up for the program and will each receive 20 native coastal plants (or seedlings) and 30 copies of the 'Coastal Plants of the Burdekin Dry Tropics' booklet as a class resource.

"The schools will also receive a series of plant activities to learn about the importance of native plants and the role they play in coastal ecosystems," she said.

"Saint Patrick's College will be receiving their kit this Monday and will join staff from the GBRMPA, Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM and Greening Australia to plant some of the coastal natives mentioned in the booklet around their schoolyard."

The 60 page booklet called 'Coastal Plants of the Burdekin Dry Tropics' was produced by Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM in conjunction with Coastal Dry Tropics Landcare Incorporated.

Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM Community Engagement Facilitator, Paul Wuth, said the booklet is colourful, user-friendly and profiles 50 species of native coastal plants that are all suitable for residential gardens.

"We encourage students, and by extension the community, to help protect our delicate coastal areas by planting coastal natives in the backyard and avoiding exotic species," he said.

Greening Australia General Manager Bob Osborne said planting native trees would provide habitat for fauna and possibly attract a wealth of butterflies and birds into backyards.

"They can also form wildlife corridors in urban areas, they require less water and generally increase the health of the coastal ecosystem," he said.

"If people are looking for plants suited to the Burdekin region I encourage them to check out Greening Australia's native plant nursery in Pimlico."

The booklets are free and available from Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM by phoning 4724 3544. Greening Australia's native plant nursery can be contacted by phoning 4796 0411.

This event is made possible with the assistance of Coastal Dry Tropics Landcare Incorporated.

Media opportunity:

When: 11am, Monday 23 February 2009

Where: Saint Patrick's College, 45 The Strand, Townsville

Activity: Students will receive their 'Coastal Plants of the Burdekin Dry Tropics' booklets and then participate in tree planting with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM and Greening Australia.

Ends...

The Reef Guardian Schools program is an education initiative of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority that develops partnerships between schools and their communities to work towards a sustainable future for the environment and our Great Barrier Reef. Currently in its seventh year, over 60 000 students in more than 150 schools across Queensland are involved in the program. GBRMPA works in partnership with Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM to deliver this program.

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