

Weed Watch.

Easter Cassia

This weed was a very common garden plant in many gardens and now can be found throughout South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales. It is often seen along creek banks and roadsides.



Easter cassia

Easter cassia grows as a shrub up to 5 meters tall but more often seen to 3-4 meters. Its leaves grow in an alternate pattern with 3-6 pairs of leaflets.

Easter Cassias can be easily seen around Easter time when they produce masses of bright yellow flowers.

Unfortunately flowering is followed by hundreds of slender brown seed pods up to 13cm long. Each seed pod contains 5-10 seeds which are carried by wind and water.

Interesting Ideas.

*Ever wondered what your reaction time is?
Try this fun test (darting sheep)
on your computer.*



[Reaction Test](http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/sleep/sheep/reaction_version5.swf)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/sleep/sheep/reaction_version5.swf

Parkcare Groups.

Parkcare groups are volunteers doing rehabilitation work on these Sundays each month.

Would you like to get involved?

Nielsen Park (To be advised)
Prince Henry Heights (3rd Sunday)
Waterbird Habitat (4th Sunday)

Nielsen Park

This park is located at the eastern end of Tarlington Street. (Walkway accesses also via Rowbotham Street and Nielsen Court.)

Prince Henry Heights

This group is still working along Prince Henry Drive.

The Waterbird Habitat

This group is active on the 4th Sunday each month on the main land and the islands.

Rehabilitation may include weed removal, propagating and planting native species as well as monitoring plants and wildlife.

For more information on Parkcare groups and to confirm dates, please contact –

Kristie Jenkinson (TRC)

4688 6514 or 0408 714 215

kristie.jenkinson@toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au

FEP News.

We are starting to get a number of groups interested in participating with our weed control activities. If you know of any other groups that may be interested in helping out they can contact Kristie Jenkinson (TRC) (details above).

Unfortunately due to the rain (not usually a problem in Toowoomba) we were unable to participate on the Clean up Australia date 7th March. We will have another go at it after winter when, once dry, it should be a bit more accessible to the bush areas where the rubbish is located.

***Friends of the Escarpment Parks
Toowoomba Inc.***

FEP Membership is only \$5 per year

Would you like to support FEP? Membership is only \$5 per year (\$10/Family)



The
**Escarpment
Park Friend**

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FEP, Caring for Toowoomba's Bushlands

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Species Watch.

Orchard Swallowtail Butterfly *Papilio aegeus* is also known as Large Citrus Butterfly or Orchard Butterfly. Orchard butterflies belong to the family PAPILIONIDAE, commonly known as Swallowtail Butterfly. Most of the butterflies in this family are large in size and with brilliant colours. They are called Swallowtails because some of species have tailed hind wings however, not all family members have tails. The Orchard Swallowtail Butterflies have no tails.



Female Orchard Swallowtail Butterfly

Photo by Euan McLean (FEP)

They are a common large butterfly. The Male, wing span is 120mm and the underneath of the male hind-wings have less white and more red patches with small blue crescents. The female wing span is 140mm and is similar to the male but browner, with a white patch on the forewings, showing brown veins.

The Orchard Butterfly larva can grow up to 60mm. The third and later instar larva turn to more green in colour, with irregular yellowish-white markings. It takes four weeks for the caterpillar to grow up and ready to turn into a pupa.

Caterpillars in this family have special method to defence against predators. They have a special fork-shaped organ osmeterium on their heads, when disturbed, will shoot out and produce the pungent smell. The Orchard caterpillar displays the osmeterium from it head, which is brightly red colour and quite scary.

The pupa is attached head upwards to a stem of food plant by the cremaster on one end and a central silken girdle. The pupa will stay motionless for two weeks. Usually the adults emerge in early morning. In warm season, it takes about 5 to 6 weeks from egg to an adult. The colour of the pupa usually matches the colour of the background. It could be brown, grey or green in colour.

http://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_butterflies/Orch_butt.htm

This newly emerged butterfly (left) was spotted trying to dry off in the rain in Nielsen Park early March.

Larval host plants include citrus trees (native and exotic), boronias and flindersia sp. including crows ash. The larvae change their appearance as they go through several instars. The first two instars resemble a bird dropping, possibly to confuse potential predators. The stage before pupation is quite attractive.



Orchard Swallowtail third instar

They can be found from Cape York to Victoria along Eastern Australia in a wide variety of habitats from moist rainforests to drier eucalypt woodlands as well as suburban gardens and citrus orchards.

**John Swarbrick (FEP)
& Hugh Krenske (FEP)**

Back Yard Project.

Attracting frogs to your back yard

Australia is blessed with some of the most unique frog species on earth.

Unfortunately 37 of Australia's frog species are vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered mainly due to habitat destruction, which causes the loss of food, water and breeding sites. While some types of frogs are totally unsuited to a backyard garden environment, there are plenty of others, which respond enthusiastically to the creation of a frog-friendly backyard. Here are some tips to attracting native frogs.

Having permanent water is a good start, as frogs love moisture due to the fact that they breathe through their skin. When the weather is warm or the wind is strong, frogs need a place where they can replenish the moisture content in their bodies. In the wild, tadpoles feed on algae and decomposing vegetable matter but in the backyard environment tadpoles will live happily on boiled lettuce. Tadpoles will only eat the green outer leaves, not the heart.

Frogs eggs are prey for many animals so it is important to have a few floating water plants, some reeds or a rocky crevice or two at surface level in your backyard pond for them to lay eggs in.



Can you spot the frog?

It is vital that the tadpoles have some sort of gently sloping ramp provided so they can climb out of the water once their metamorphic process is complete.

Provide plenty of vegetation around the pond to give young frogs places to hide. Frogs also need vegetation as a source of shade to keep their skins moist.

A big pond isn't necessary for breeding. A bucket filled with a few centimetres of water is all some species need in desperate times. If for any reason a pond is not practical, having some sort of moist area in your garden that can be always be kept wet will help.

[Toowoomba Regional Council Bushcare](http://www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au/bushcare)
www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au/bushcare
[Toowoomba Bushcare Facebook Site](#)

Toowoomba's Frogs

Frogs found in Toowoomba include:

Striped Marsh Frog (most common)

Bleating Tree Frog (occasionally heard)

Green Tree Frog (very occasional)

Emerald Spotted Tree Frog (occasionally)

Eggs



Frog eggs hatch in a few days.

Tadpoles born in spring and early summer will most likely turn into frogs before winter. Tadpoles born in late summer and autumn will live in their pond habitat over winter turning into frogs in the coming hot season. The emerging frogs are quite small – able to sit on a 5 cent coin. However they quickly grow in size with some reaching 6 cm in length.

Tadpole

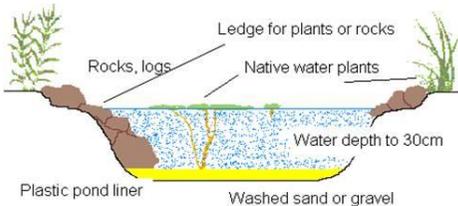


Tadpoles get oxygen via their gills. Most pond species graze upon rotting materials using their hundreds of teeth and filter microscopic particles out of the water with the use of their gills. They get most of their nutrition from decomposing organisms, which are breaking down the material they ingest. They get little in the way of nutrients from the dead plant material that they are feeding upon. Organisms such as tadpoles that eat dead organic matter are called detritivores.

Frogs

Frogs on the other hand breathe via their lungs and eat only living things, mainly insects. Larger frogs may eat other frogs, mice, lizards, and anything else that they encounter. Frogs don't have teeth like tadpoles do. These are lost during development. Instead frogs swallow their food whole, sometimes using their hands to push the food into their mouth.

Once they turn into frogs, they live in the garden hiding during the day in moist, dark places. This may be under rocks, logs, under mulch, or heaps of rubbish. They have many predators including owls, kookaburras, butcherbirds and perhaps the larger lizards. Domestic hens, cats and dogs will also attack and kill any frogs they find, often eating them.



You could make your own frog pond

Stock your pond with fish

Stocking your pond with appropriate fish will remove any threat from mosquitoes. While frogs may eat mosquitoes, tadpoles do not.

Pacific Blue Eyes, a native fish from our coastal streams, are deadly on any small insect or lava that live in the water. If you want to select a fish that belongs to the local inland catchment, you could select **Purple Spotted Gudgeons**, not quite as aggressive a feeder as the Pacific Blue Eye. Both of these can be obtained from pet shops that specialize in native fish.

If you take native fish from your local catchment, you will have to abide by the State Government legislation that limits you to 20 fish in possession at any time. Fish bred from these wild fish have to be returned to the catchment from which the parents came. It is probably better to purchase your initial stock and

breed from these, as their offspring do not have to be returned to the wild.

Avoid gold fish as these are said to eat frogs' eggs.

Water Quality

Where possible use rain water to fill your pond. The Toowoomba Regional Council supplied water contains chlorine, which is harmful to fish and tadpoles. If this is your only source of water, fill several buckets with town water, enough to fill your pond and let them stand for several days before adding it to the pond. Alternatively, you can purchase chlorine neutralizer for about \$5.00. (A bottle will treat about 1200 litres of chlorinated water.)

Creating a Frog Friendly Garden.

While most frogs need water to breed, frogs can visit and live in your garden even if there is no pond. You may need to make some changes in part of your garden to make visiting frogs feel welcome.

In part of your garden plant a bush like setting using native shrubs and grasses. This area will provide shelter from the hot sun and winds as well as providing food for small insects which frogs will eat. Frogs like a moist environment. If you can keep part of your garden lush, frogs will find it more appealing.

Rocks and small logs will also provide frogs with a moist environment.

Placing a clay or PVC drain pipe vertically in the ground can provide a cool moist area attractive to green tree frogs.

Compost bins if kept moist and covered will also provide shelter for frogs, as well as providing them with a food source.

Do not introduce frogs into your garden. If you provide a frog friendly garden, the frogs will come naturally.

For an email pamphlet on how to build a frog pond please contact

Hugh and Kay

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**This exert was prepared by the
Krenskes at 210 West Street,
Toowoomba**

🔊 [Bleating Tree Frog Sound](#)