



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter December
2012

Previous Sunday meeting – Darrell Place - 18th November

Anna and a team of four spent the morning at Group Area Central, where a profusion of golden Bulbine Lilies *Bulbine bulbosa* vied with equally golden *St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*. Anna led the Annual Plant Survey, pegging out the site we selected last year. Gösta worked tirelessly to discourage *Great Mullein *Verbascum thapsus* and *Wild Sage *Salvia verbeneca* while Graham and newcomer Ian cut and dabbed *Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus*. Arminel sprayed the proliferating *African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula* seedlings and tussocks along the track. (Hooray – contractors have sprayed the ALG infestation around the nearby Reservoir!) We enjoyed the usual fine fare for morning tea at the end of the session. Thanks to all!

Annual Plant Survey Mt Arawang site - 14th November

President Anna, Arminel and Rachel Marks (Molonglo Catchment Group) spent the morning poring over plants at this east-facing spot, where Kangaroos laze and there are always birds about. We removed several *Serrated Tussock *Nassella trichotoma* plants, some flowering. And we revised and refined our survey techniques for this exercise. These surveys yield data in a standardised form, making comparisons between reserves and seasons more reliable.

STOP PRESS

Malcolm Gill will lead a Bushfire Anniversary Walk Sunday 20th January 2013. Details next issue.

Future programme

Wednesday Evening 12th December 6pm **Verbascum Vamoose!**

A CRPCG Community Weeding event with three meeting points – Namatjira Drive (Doug), Darrell Place (Anna and Graham) and Kathner Street (Gösta)

Please RSVP by Tues 11th Dec
CONTACT Anna – anna.m.see@gmail.com
PH: 0407 217 651

Next Meeting – Sunday 16th December Group Area South – Mt Arawang

Note – in the warmer months, we meet in the mornings!!

- 8 am – 10.30 am
- Plant ID; remove & poison exotic growth
- Wear long sleeves and trousers, enclosed shoes, hat and gloves.
- Christmas Treat Morning Tea with the Tea Laddie providing tea and coffee.

Need more info? Contact Arminel 6231 7392



No Flies On Us! Ring 6231 7392 for a Fly Veil!!

Changing Guard

Our Canberra Nature Park South staff are currently Kristy Gould (Ranger In Charge), Mark Sweaney (Senior Ranger), Brad Green (Area Ranger for Coleman) and Nina Bruns.

What's around

Noisy Miner *Manorina melanocephala*

Family Meliphagidae (mod. Lat. from Gk *meli* = honey + *phagidae* = eater). Both the common name “Miner” and the genus name “Manorina” are of obscure origin. Lat. *melano* = black (combining form) + Gk. *cephala* = head (Other Miners include the Bell Miner, with its tinkling, bell-like call, often heard along the NSW South Coast.)

Endemic to E. and S.E. Australia, Noisy Miners are common in woodland and suburban gardens. They eat nectar, fruit & insects especially manna, honeydew and lerp from Eucalypts.



Noisy Miners breed throughout the year. They are aggressive birds with interesting social behaviours, eg. group mobbing of predators. Despite **minor** similarities of name and behaviour, Noisy **Miners** are a protected species, unlike the introduced pest, Indian **Myna** *Acridotheres tristis*.

Photo courtesy of John Bundock

Dam News

Our highest pH reading at the Kathner Street Dam over the past month has been a fairly alarming 10.6. Approaching caustic! Through Anna, we consulted Dr Stephen Skinner. We're now fairly certain that the Chapman drainage works undertaken in the catchment for this dam are the most likely underlying cause.



Photo Malcolm Gill 30 Nov 2012

Health check of the algal soup – Arminel (left) and Pat (right) catch and count bugs. Centre - Martin Lind (our Catchment Waterwatch Co-ordinator)

There are two other possible factors. One is the high level of phosphate already in this dam – a legacy of superphosphate application above it in the 1950's. The other is a species of *Anabaena* cyanobacteria. (This one is a nitrogen-fixing organism. It isn't known to be toxic. It auto spores and the spores drop straight down and grow on the bottom of the dam until they are bigger.) The cyanobacteria are a symptom of the conditions rather than the cause. They would be taking advantage of the alkalinity, and could be causing the smell.

Parkcarers suspect the alkalinity is coming from the large concrete culvert put in uphill of the dam late in the Chapman drainage works, together with the gabions. The gabions (ie broken rock, to slow run-off, in wire baskets) are made from blue metal. Alkaline dust from these rocks may well be making its way into the dam.

Is there any danger to users of the dam – especially to horses following the equestrian trail? We don't know yet, but we've got sleuths on the case.

Arminel and Pat

Grassland wildflowers ramble

Friends of Aranda Bushland
Saturday 15 Decembe
9.30am sharp - 12noon.
Bookings FriendsOfArandaBushland@gmail.com
or 6251 1601

Goodbye and Good Luck to Fiery Phil!

Philip Selmes left his post as PCS ParkCare Coordinator cob Friday 10 October. PCS Community and Visitor Services manager, Odile Arman is holding the fort until a new Parkcare Coordinator is in position!