



# COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter August

2009

## Previous Sunday meeting July 19<sup>th</sup>

It was a lovely day to be out among GAN/Chauvel's verbasicum, phalaris and Paterson's Curse which received special attention from various well-focused members, bringing to light many *Senecio quadridentatus* seedlings.

Reet found an attractive little *Solanum pseudocapsicum* shrub (exotic), has stripped the berries off it and will keep an eye out for flowers to confirm the identification.

Doug made a special trip over the maintenance track to read the position of yet another pine seedling (No. 53) before yanking it out. It had been spotted near the newly-discovered snow gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora* ssp. *pauciflora*) in a rocky outcrop facing west: a species list made here named 49 plants of which 36 were native, a gratifying tally for midwinter.

Paul was with us again after an absence of many months and was struck by the improvement to the Ridge as a whole. He plans to choose a caretaker area closer to home – perhaps near Chapman Primary School's trail. This made our day as there is nothing more valuable than having dedicated caretakers scattered along the Ridge. ✨

## Future programme

With the cooler months here, we have reverted to afternoon Sunday work parties.

### Next meeting, Sunday August 16<sup>th</sup>

- 1.30-4 pm
- GAC/Darrell – weed removal and plant ID.
- meet at Darrell Place, or GAC/Darrell
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, rain gear.

AGM Sunday October 18<sup>th</sup> Nature Trail ✨

## Glovebox guide to frogs of the ACT region

This guide has been published by the Molonglo Catchment Group to assist in the identification of selected frogs of the ACT and surrounding areas. It is available from the Southern ACT Catchment Group. ✨

## Mt Taylor 20 years on

Who ever would like to come along: rain, snow or sun. There will be a celebration cake etc, but please bring your own hot water for what ever you want to drink.

There will be 10 trees to plant (the holes have been dug), the plaques for the rocks and the bench will be in place too.

Saturday August 8, 2 PM,  
Park Gate Sulwood Drive/Mannheim Street, Kambah.

More information: Anne I'Ons [ajions@iimetro.com.au](mailto:ajions@iimetro.com.au) ✨

## Mount Taylor Park Care Group

From Anne's report: "*The mountain covers over 5 square kilometers.*

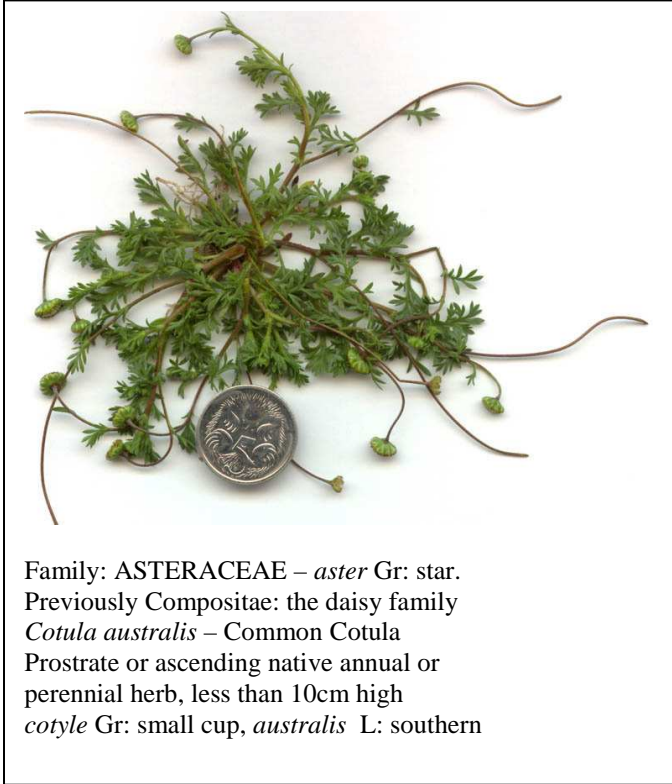
*"The Park care group has been in existence since August 1989, and has a fluctuating membership. We have the names of 290 people who have worked on Taylor over those years, and many more from conservation groups, school students, science surveys, etc. We also know that over 60 rangers have passed through our group, and many have spread over Australia since working in the ACT!*

*"Over the years we have removed some 45500 woody weeds. We have also planted about 1000 trees and understorey species. Enthusiasts have identified many orchids.*

*"The southwestern side has been severely burnt recently, 1997 and 2003. This has affected the old trees, destroying about 90% of them.*

*"The Acacia penninervis (endangered and only found in three locations in the ACT) recovered well, with seeding, but are now suffering from lack of rainfall. The endangered Swainsona recta, and the rare Acacia gunnii (30 plus plants) and Persoonia rigida (2 plants) survived the fire. In spring 2008 we saw many Acacia gunnii, but the Swainsona recta have been badly affected by poor rainfall and roo cropping in spring. The two older Persoonia rigida have survived well. The northern sides of Mt Taylor, generally more open woodland, have recovered extremely well, with increases in native grasses. Cymbopogon refractus (barbed wire grass), found on the North side in 1991, has spread all over Taylor, a superb grass eaten young, but it is being attacked by the hordes of roos, and over grazing across the mountain is now a threat, especially to native grasses. Over 320 roos are now present. There are probably four echidnas, three wallabies and one large and beautiful walleroo." ✨*

## What's around



Family: ASTERACEAE – *aster* Gr: star.  
Previously Compositae: the daisy family  
*Cotula australis* – Common Cotula  
Prostrate or ascending native annual or  
perennial herb, less than 10cm high  
*cotyle* Gr: small cup, *australis* L: southern



Family:  
HALORAGACEAE –  
*halos* Gr: salt, sea,  
*rhagos*: grape berry .

*Gonocarpus*  
*tetragynus*  
Erect or ascending  
native perennial herb  
15-30 cm high  
*tetra* Gr: four, *gyne*  
Gr: woman

## McQuoid's Hill

This part of Canberra Nature Park can be accessed from the Kambah Pool Road. The Australian Native Plant Society's Wednesday Walkers recently scoured McQuoid's Hill and published their combined plant list for 20/8/08 and 17/6/09. Their report can be read and the plant list viewed at [http://nativeplants-canberra.asn.au/plant\\_list.aspx](http://nativeplants-canberra.asn.au/plant_list.aspx)

Although so close to us (and so much smaller) they list 7 species that we have not found:

<i>Pomaderris pallida</i> .	<i>Ajuga australis</i>
<i>Bossiaea buxifolia</i>	<i>Geranium retrorsum</i>
<i>Kunzea erocoides</i>	<i>Luzula densiflora</i>
<i>Vittadinia gracilis</i>	

Michael Robbins who provided the above information included a note concerning *Pomaderris pallida*: ecologist Greg Baines is interested to know of any further populations as the data are used when planning prescribed burns, weed spraying etc.

The ANPS walkers visit Cooleman Ridge shortly and it will be fascinating to see what they find. ☼

## Birds

There is a lot of activity: scarlet robins, clouds of yellow-rumped thornbills, choughs and magpies in dispute, a duck investigating a dead *Eucalyptus nortonii* above the Fence Post Hill enclosure, a raptor in a dead *E. rossii*. ☼

## Our own history

Jenny Horsfield has been interviewing Ben Champion about the recent history of Cooleman Ridge. Some snippets follow:

*Cooleman, a subdivision of Yarralumla, was leased by the Champion family from 1937 until 1996 and run as a grazing enterprise for high-yielding merino sheep. Ben grazed sheep on the ridge till all the dog attacks forced him to get rid of his sheep from the 1960s. He only rarely took cattle on to the ridge, only in a good season when there was lots of grass. Cattle tended to push over fences and be a nuisance to the public. Stock was never grazed...in the north-western corner of what is now the reserve and beyond, because there were no fences to the east and no way to have prevented the stock straying on to roads and suburbs.*

*The whole property was fertilised with superphosphate in the 60s and 70s and there was aerial sowing of clover. Most of the flat country was ploughed and planted with phalaris. A few spots on the ridge which were arable were also sown with phalaris (the flatter areas to the west). Phalaris also spread of course, as it has done to the wet gully above Kathner St.*

*Ben used to buy his lucerne hay, because it was cheaper in time, labour and machinery costs than growing it. But it did bring in weeds. The first crop of Paterson's Curse appeared in a paddock near Bulga Creek. Ben didn't recognize what it was. After that, it spread rapidly all over the property. Ben had to spray from then on, taking a little backpack up onto the ridge or a trailer behind his four-wheel drive. Scotch thistles were pretty thick in some paddocks because of the improved fertility that came with superphosphate. Cattle wouldn't eat the thistles but once he began adjusting horses they soon cleaned up the thistles. ☼*