



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter February 2014

Previous Sunday Non-Event – January Work Party Cancelled

No rain since November. Country tinder-dry. Authorities straining every sinew to conduct fuel-reduction burns – several patches of our Ridge above Chapman were successfully charred in early January.

Anticipating conditions where a spark from iron on stone can start a blaze, our co-ordinator Jasmine advised all groups to cancel volunteer activities planned for ACT Parks and Reserves from 13th January up to and including Sunday 19th January 2014. So we did – Rob sent out a message to the troops and we took down all the placards advertising the event.

As it happened, there was rain on the Saturday – Malcolm recorded 28 mil at Kathner Street.

Au Revoir, Anna!

Our President, Anna, is resigning from her position, effective from Sunday 16th February.

She is moving to the coast, but will stay on the committee for the rest of its term.

The Group has been extremely fortunate to have had Anna as its most recent leader.

We've appreciated her calm authority, her intimate knowledge of the Reserve, and her capacity to inspire members and liaise with the authorities. Thank you so much, Anna!

In accordance with our constitution, the Committee has appointed one of its elected members to carry out the role of President until our next AGM. **Our Vice President, Alan Ford, has kindly agreed to shoulder the Presidential responsibilities. His e-mail contact is eremophila1@bigpond.com**

Future programme

Regular weekly weeding sessions occur on Friday mornings at Kathner Street and at Mt Arawang on Wednesday mornings.

In the warmer months, we meet in the mornings.

**Next Meeting – Sunday 16th February
Take 2:- Nature Trail & Pauline's Patch**

Time: 8.30 am – 12 midday

Parking at Kathner St Entry

Plant ID; remove/poison weeds.

Wear suitable protective clothing

BYO drink & snack to share.

Queries? Contact Arminel 6231 7392

For the diary

Tuesday 18th February 5.30 – 7.30 pm
Southern ACT Catchment Group
Park Care & Share Session 1 - Native
Vegetation Identification at Kathner Street
with Arminel & Gösta.
Contact Martine on 6296 6400

Thursday 20 Feb 12.30 pm
Friends of the ANBG lunchtime talk
ANBG Theatre
**Anna See – 'Centenary Canberra BioBlitz:
bouquets and bushbats.'**

Tale from Tamworth

We hear rhymester Greg North won the Bush Laureate Award at the recent Tamworth festival. His winning poem was about Phillip Fricker who is 'fracking' the land (for coal seam gas).

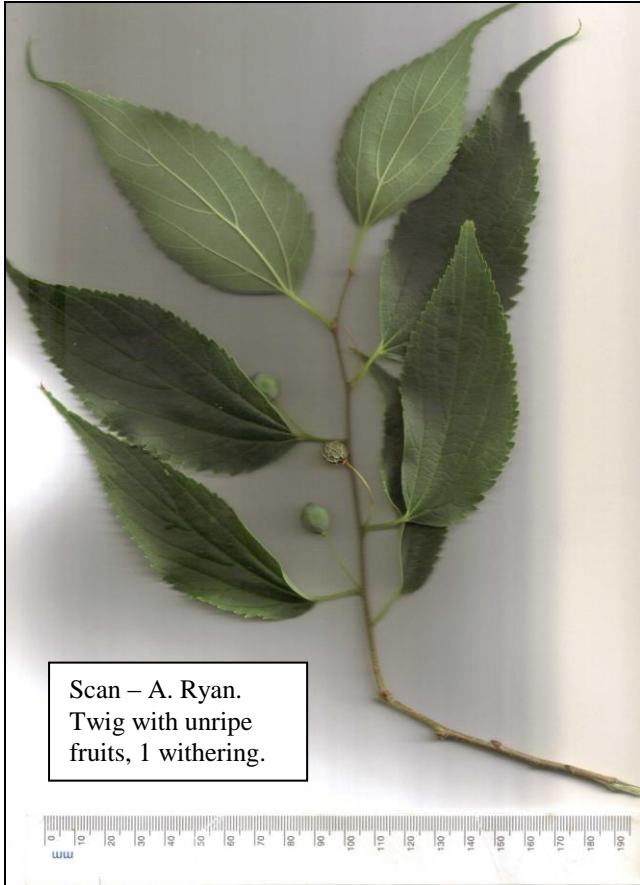
Library List On-Line Soon

Erika (6288 3550) is our Librarian. Members can borrow the publications we hold.

What's around

**Celtis australis*

Common Names – Southern Nettle Tree, European Hackberry



Family: *Ulmaceae* – from Lat. *ulmus* = elm
(There is considerable technical debate about this. **C. a.* doesn't have stinging hairs, but DNA tests apparently suggest it may indeed be related to nettles!)

Genus: *Celtis* – origin obscure, but perhaps simply a variant of Lat. *Celtus* = celtic.

Species: *australis* – Lat. = southern.

Small to medium-sized deciduous shade tree. Height to 15 metres.

Origin - Southern Europe, North Africa and Asia Minor.

Leaves - lance-shaped, lop-sided, serrated edges. Darker green and rougher above, with a downy underside.

Flowers - apetalous wind-pollinated flowers are perfect (ie hermaphrodite, having both male and female organs), small and green, either singly or in small clusters.

Fruit - an edible drupe (ie fleshy, with a pit or stone), blue-black in autumn. Attractive to birds. Seed retains its viability for some years.

Bark of the trunk - smooth and grey.

C. a.* was planted in Donaldson St. Braddon, and Eyre St. Kingston. It is used quite extensively as a street tree in the South of France, where its common name is **Micocoulier.

References used – lots, both on-line and in print. Thanks to Martine Franco, from SACTCG, who recognised the blighters on the Ridge.

**Celtis australis* is an environmental weed in New South Wales (especially Southern Tablelands region) and the ACT. It usually spreads from plantings as a street tree, invading dry forests, open woodlands, riparian areas and urban bushland.

The Wednesday Weeders have been felling and poisoning a thriving copse of **C. a.* It must have been present on the northern slope of Mt Arawang prior to the 2003 fire – older trunks have fire-scars; many newer trunks have shot from the roots. The cool, dense shade, and the deep leaf litter under the copse, have favoured **C. a.*'s many seedlings, as well as the emergence of such other companion weedy species as Ivy and Privet. We are also finding outliers both uphill and down dale from this infestation.

Documenting the Trail

Jean Geue, a hard-working champion of ParkCare in the ACT, has made an 8-page submission to Government on issues arising from the ACT Draft Trails Strategy. We commend it to members as thorough and articulate. Electronic or paper copies are available from Jean or from Arminel.

Taking Stock

Thanks to members who've helped the committee update the list of tools and equipment held by the group. Housekeeping Rools!

Cattle at the Old Dam

Our request to have this dam fenced, and to install a stock-watering trough, has been a lead balloon. The cows are back in!