



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter February 2015

Previous Meeting - Sunday 18th January GAS Arawang

A grey and muggy morning saw a good turnout of volunteers. We welcomed back our octogenerian cyclist mate Gösta, as cheerful and willing as ever. He sets us such a great example!

Led by Alan, a scout party of Rob, Graham and Gösta set out after woody weeds, heading north along the base trail. Their quarry sighted, the scouts clambered up the stony hillside and attacked. Photos exist to show the slaughter.

The rest of the mob stayed near our usual site, above the wooden bridge. As ever, Rohan and Doug found **Rubus fruticosus* Blackberry and **Phalaris aquatica* aplenty. Arminel and Linda bagged seeding **Vicia sp.* Vetch just above the drain, then joined the lads. Pat hunted Bracken rhizomes for propagation. Malcolm joined us at a convivial morning tea. He had cycled from Kathner Street, weeding as he went.

Future programme

NB – Remember! We meet in the mornings during the warmer months!

**Sunday 15th February
Nature Trail and Pauline's Patch –
Kathner St Entry in Chapman**

Time:- 8.30 am – 12 noon.

Bring:- hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet.

Tasks:- Plant ID and weed removal. Maybe some planting, conditions permitting.

Afterburn

Following the November prescribed burn at Kathner Street, the blackened hillside has begun to glow. These yellow flowers haven't just been **Hypericum perforatum* St John's Wort, nor **Hypochaeris radicata* Flatweed. We're delighted to report that *Tricoryne elatior* Yellow Rush Lily has had a great season – here's Malcolm Gill's photo!



The Friday Weeders have counted 40 reappearing species. They are now attacking exposed weeds. **Eragrostis curvula* Tall African Lovegrass tussocks near the dam are already carrying new seed!

Weed Watching

The Committee has appointed Linda to document and identify weeds. Linda is our first port of call if we notice a problem or if we want to check whether we have a problem. To report either, email linda@xamax.com.au

Patchworkers

So as to update our records, Secretary Rob will contact members who look after their own patch in their own time. We also hope to establish a more formal annual reporting mechanism for this important facet of the Group's work.

What's around

White-stemmed Gum Moth, *Chelepteryx collesi*

Native of Eucalyptus forests in south eastern Australia. Common in ACT according to CSIRO. They are one of the largest moth species in the region.
Thanks to Dr Philip Spradbery for this information.

Size range

Adults: 16 cm wingspan
Larvae: 12 cm length

White-stemmed gum moth caterpillars feed on eucalypt leaves from winter through to summer. Mature caterpillars often come down from trees in January and February to wander, crossing roads and entering gardens in search of a place to pupate.

Adult moths emerge on autumn nights to mate and lay their eggs on eucalypt leaves.

On-line references – Australian Museum website, Wikipedia, PubMed (Clinical effects of exposure to the white-stemmed Gum Moth – Geary et al., 2004); CSIRO



Danger - The bristles can penetrate human skin and cause painful skin irritations, even after the larvae have been preserved in alcohol! And the cocoons have also been known to cause injury when handled carelessly.

Caterpillar Photo P. Ryan

Kingdom: Animalia; **Phylum:** Arthropoda; **Class:** Insecta; **Order:** Lepidoptera; **Family:** Anthelidae; **Genus:** *Chelepteryx*; **Species:** *C. collesi*

This moth pupates in sheltered spots in leaf litter and under logs and in crevices in bark. Cocoons appear on tree trunks, walls and even in letterboxes. They are also covered in bristles which are forced out through the silk by the caterpillar.

Sharp bristles protect the pupating caterpillar from predators but when touched stick into the skin causing irritation.



Images of Adult Male (above) and Female (below) from the Atlas of Living Australia

Traces of Giants

Pat measured the charred remnant of a big *Eucalyptus polyanthemus* stump in George's Gully – 1.7 metres diameter. It's still alive – a single small epicormic trunk is growing from the base, from which it could be identified.

Lost and Found

On Arawang, workers still find suburban detritus from 2003. The latest items are a flue cap and a wrecked audio. On tracks, we continue to pick up plastic bags of dog turds. Yuck.

Succession Planning

Congratulations to former President Anna on the arrival mid January of Rory John. He was 9.1 pounds. Both are doing well. She sends greetings to you all! She misses us!

Stock Reports

There have been goats on Mt Taylor!! So far, we haven't spotted any on our Ridge. But cattle are being introduced again to trample and graze exotic grasses near the Old Dam.

Mushrooms, anyone?

Fungi are appearing on the Ridge and surrounding suburbs. Beware Yellow-staining mushrooms and Death Caps!