



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

**Newsletter
November 2016**

***Previous meeting
Sunday 16th October
Cooleman Trig***

A very windy afternoon on Cooleman Trig failed to deter a good turnout for the working party. Apart from regular participants Linda, Rob, Pat, Arminel, Graham, Malcolm, Rohan and Brigitte, it was great to welcome Lena and Konnie. Everyone fanned out from the trig to tackle their chosen weed. Euphorbia was a main target and by the end of the afternoon it was pleasing to see a significant result for our efforts. Arminel and Pat also removed/poisoned 2 plum trees, 1 privet, 6 Cootas and 10 Sweetbriars on their way back down to Freebody Place. Earlier in the day Linda supervised five female volunteers as they worked very diligently removing more than 60 briar roses, plus a large pyracanthus, and a few prunus and hawthorns.

WEEDING TIPS

Spring is a wonderful time for flowers and new growth in plants. However, it is also a time when weeds proliferate. Below are some tips for efficient and safe weeding.

1. If weeding manually, try to do this after rain so that weeds pull out easily from the soft soil. Grab the plant near the roots to ensure the whole plant is removed and no roots are left behind. Bend your knees a little to protect your back.
2. If the weed is difficult to remove, then loosen the soil around it with a digging implement. Be careful not to disturb the soil too much as this will encourage other weeds to germinate and grow.

***Next Meeting: AGM
Sunday 20th November***

Darrell Place

Time: 8.30 am – 12 pm; AGM at 11 am

Meet: End of Darrell Pl

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

Task: plant identification, weeding, AGM

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

3. If the weeds are too tough or time is short, cut off the flowers and seed heads to reduce the chances of the weed spreading.
 4. Glyphosate is the only poison that volunteers on the ridge are allowed to use. If spraying, then ensure correct dosage, wear protective clothing (gloves, long-sleeves, mask), only spray when there is no wind to avoid drift to other plants and people. On windy days, it is best to use the cut+dab method, painting the poison onto the weed within 30 seconds after cutting it close to the ground.
 5. Always use a dye with poison, so that it can easily be seen where the poison is. Not only is this a requirement of all our volunteers on the ridge, it is very handy to know what has and hasn't been treated, and if the poison has inadvertently been transferred to hands/clothing.
- Linda recently picked up a bag of dabber-doovers from the Weston depot. These can be filled 50/50 glyphosate/water, and tucked into a pocket or bag to be used wherever a weed is seen. Perfect for just dabbing on leaves or when doing cut+dab, with no chance of spray-

drift. The sponge-tops don't last long when treating spiky plants, so we received extra tops. Come to the AGM and get one free!

GREEN ARMY COMBATS HERITAGE WEEDS

Wed 28 Sep 8.45 am: 10 people met at Kathner St: 6 members of the Green Army, their supervisor, Lizabeth Collier and 3 land carers – Arminel Ryan, Jenny Horsfield and Mike Morriss. Between us we had a wide range of tools and a bunch of weed poisoning wands. After introductions, Arminel talked about our main target weed, *Verbascum thapsus*. She called it a heritage weed because of its historic importance to farming from the early days of white occupation. Among its many uses was the making of torches from its dried stems. In troubled times in England, these torches could become fire brands for arson attacks on landlords' hayricks. Our method of attack was to chip the plants off at ground level and dab their central growing points with the poison wands. Compared to spraying, this is safe for the user and has a comparatively low environmental impact, as small, controlled doses can be dispensed by the wands. We also attacked two blackberry bushes this way. By morning tea a considerable area infested with *Verbascum* had been worked over. The severed rosettes were raked into swales. Prickly, dead branches of surrounding shrubs, mainly *Bursaria spinosa*, were dragged out and placed on the disturbed ground and patches of bare ground down the slope. This will retard soil erosion, discourage disturbance by rabbits and encourage the growth of native plants. After lunch, efforts were made to dig up patches of St John's wort but it was clear that more work is needed on these infestations. We moved on to the head of the main gully, which drains to the north where we found lots of introduced plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). European Plantains always appeared soon after the settlers put their grazing animals onto the land, so were sometimes called "White Man's Foot". For the rest of the day we dug out the shallow rooted plantains and made swales on a patch of steep sloping bare ground. The Green Army group enabled the land care group to lift our level of achievement. There was encouragement for us in showing the young workers that worthwhile improvements to natural plant communities can be achieved through

persistent, hard work. The important point that a sound knowledge of the plant communities has to underlay effective restoration work was well illustrated. Mike Morriss.

GREVILLEAS ARE GREMLINS!

We're all familiar with Grevilleas, the spider-flowered plants found in many gardens. But some are also invaders. This season seems to be one when we may need to attack them before they multiply in our Reserve. New plants are coming up near the few long-established *G. juniperina* near the Namatjira notice-board - the Wednesday Weeders area. There are Grevillea bushes along the cut-off drain, heading towards Group Area North above Chauvel. We have also discovered a prostrate form near Group Area Central, east of Darrell Pl. It appears that not only the original species and sub-species of *G. juniperina* and *G. rosemarinifolia* but also many of their garden cultivars, easily become weeds. "Canberra Gem" seems particularly culpable! Identification can be difficult because of the multiplicity of hybrids and cultivars, but we can be pretty sure that any vigorous, floriferous spider-flowered grevillea bush on the Ridge has come via a suburban garden. We have no records of any endemic Grevillea having ever been found there. For this piece, I consulted *Weeds of the South-East - an Identification Guide for Australia* 2nd Ed. (F.J. Richardson, et al); the ANPS and APSA websites; a 1995 paper by Stephen Panter *Invasive Grevilleas of the Ridgeway*, which sounded an early alarm locally; and the Qld Govt Weed Factsheet on *Grevillea rosemarinifolia*.

Arminel Ryan with photo by Pat Ryan



More information about the Group's activities can be found on our [website](#), thanks to Rohan Thomas, who does a great job as web manager.