



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
January 2020

Previous meeting
Sunday 15 December
Above Chauvel Circle

St John's Wort (SJW) was again the major target this month on a cloudy and smoky morning. It was decided that we would bag the seed heads and bring them off the Ridge. Seven of us (Doug, Chris, Paul, Brigitte, Jenny, Rohan and Rob) took up secateurs and the newly-supplied shears and combed the Ridge above Chauvel Circle. While there were plenty of patches of SJW to keep us occupied, it was pleasing to note that the Group's work over many years has resulted in large weed-free areas.

As I worked near the track, a passing walker having discovered what we were doing said jokingly: 'Don't get rid of rid of St John's Wort. There won't be any vegetation left.'



Jenny, Doug, Paul, Chris and Brigitte bend their backs to St John's Wort
Photo: Rob Lundie

The occasional *Verbascum* and *Briar Rose* were also mopped up.

Next Meeting
Sunday 19 January
Darrell Place

Time: 8.30 am – 11.00 am

Meet: Darrell Place

Bring: hat, gloves, secateurs, dabber-doober, hacker, drink, raincoat if it is wet

Task: plant identification, weeding

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

Feb. meeting: Sun 16, Lincoln Pl



Paul, Doug and Chris bring down the morning's work on St John's Wort
Photo: Rob Lundie

Rob Lundie

Rort the Wort campaign

As you walk along the Ridge you may have noticed signs encouraging you to cut off the flower and seed heads of 10 St John's Wort weeds. You may wish to pull out smaller plants but try to get out as much of the root stock as possible in order to prevent re-sprouting. It is also recommended that you wear gloves as the leaves and stems are hairy and may cause skin irritation. Taking the seed-heads off the ridge can be time-consuming and difficult, so we suggest the seed-heads are left in piles along the sides of paths. Germination is unlikely in these spots, but if there is growth it will be noticed and destroyed.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to control the spread of this noxious and invasive plant.

Rob Lundie

Where there's smoke, there's smoke

Like all of Canberra, Cooleman Ridge has been blanketed in smoke for a number of months, but fortunately (so far) there have been no fires. However, nor has there been any significant rain and the dams are empty.



*Looking out from near the Commemorative Seat
Photo: Linda Spinaze*

So, it is heartening to see a number of plastic containers of water placed near animal trails. These contain sticks so that the smaller animals and insects can access the water safely. Food such as apples and sweet potatoes have been left near some of the water containers as well. If you come across these containers and have any spare water, feel free to pour it in.



Water container and food Photo: Rob Lundie

Rob Lundie

Where there's water, there are weeds

Although the Old Dam has been empty for months and months, and had only 2 mms of rain since early November, there must be some water lurking just below the surface as evidenced by the cover of dark green weeds.



Weeds in the empty Old Dam Photo: Rob Lundie

Rob Lundie

Where the wild life lives

As we walk on Cooleman Ridge we see lots of kangaroos and birds who count the Ridge as their home. What we are less likely to see are the lizards, snakes and insects that live in the grass, below ground and under the many rocks and logs. It is impossible to leave all habitats undisturbed as we walk, ride and weed. However, we can help by replacing soil and rocks as we pull out weeds. We should leave the rocks and fallen logs where they are. They are probably some creature's home.

Rob Lundie

A Safe and Happy New Year to you all