



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter September
2013

*Previous Sunday Meeting 18th
August : Group Area South –
Arawang*

A biting south-westerly awaited the nine workers who marched over the horse-paddocks for a stoush with the *Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus*. We're barely keeping this invader at bay here, with hard labour and repeated attacks, using different methods at different times of year. This time, Anna brought some *Hardenbergia violaceae* to plant instead.

Our tenth volunteer, Linda, removed African Lovegrass **Eragrostis curvula* elsewhere on the Ridge, but joined us for afternoon tea with a sample of the new strain of ALG (see previous newsletter).

Pat provided the tea, the trailer and an extra pair of hands to remove Blackberry canes and tip-layering roots.

NOTE – Blackberries have several methods of spread. Birds, foxes and some reptiles like their fruit and spread the seed in their droppings. Suckers and canes come up from existing roots. In autumn, the growing ends of the long arching canes produce new roots ready to bury themselves into moist soil.

Blackberry in flower (NSW DPI)



Anna See anna.m.see@gmail.com

Future programme

**Next Meeting – Sunday 15th Sept
Cooleman Trig**

*Parking - Monkman Street, Titheradge Place,
or Freebody Place*

- 1.30 pm – 4 pm
- Annual attack on Spurge **Euphorbia depauperata*. Maybe collecting local native plant material for propagation.
- Wear long sleeves and trousers, enclosed shoes, hat and gloves.
- BYO drink and snack to share.

For the diary

Annual General Meeting

Sunday 20th October Kathner St 1.30 – 2 pm

Cooleman Ridge Parkcare Group Committee nominations

Nominations for the committee are now open! Please contact Anna if you would like to join our wonderful committee. The AGM will be held before our October working bee.

LANDCARE AWARDS

Look out in the Chronicle and Canberra Times for the advertisements for nominees and winners of the 2013 ACT region Landcare Awards. The winners were announced at an awards ceremony breakfast on Thursday 5th September. Two of the winners are well known to our group, Jenny Horsefield and Southern ACT Catchment Group Chair, Glenys Patulny. Congratulations!

Web site URL: www.coolemanridge.org

What's around

Common Wombat *Vombatus ursinus*

Class: Mammalia **Order:** Diprotodontia **Family:** Vombatidae

Wither Wally Wombat *Doug Tinney*

Has anybody else noticed an upsurge in the signs of wombat habitation on the Ridge? Being nocturnal, wombats are not often sighted. In fact the only one I've seen was road kill on Namatjira Drive a few years back.

But, the signs this year are all over the place, chiefly through fresh diggings at sites from Mt Arawang to the Old Dam. There may be others not yet discovered however I've come across three widely separated and recently used burrows that imply active and ongoing use.

Is there a population increase or is it one animal ranging over a wide area? If anyone can corroborate my observations let the editor know.

A little about Wombats... www.ozanimals.com

Wombats are stout marsupials between 90cm and 120 cm long and can weigh up to 36 kg. They have a large, blunt head and a short, neck. Despite their slow appearance they can run quite fast. Their sharp claws and stubby, powerful legs make them great diggers. They dig burrows and tunnels in the ground for shelter and to escape from danger. Wombats can live for up to 27 years in captivity.

Habitat

Wombats are usually found in wet, partly forested areas on the coast, and on mountain ranges. Wombats live in burrows, preferring well-drained soils that are easy to dig in. The burrows can be up to 30m long, and several metres deep. *In Canberra wombats have often been seen in Tuggeranong near Gordon and Banks. There is not a lot of information out there on their distribution in Canberra (note-Anna See).*



ozanimals.com

Food

Native grasses such as wallaby grass and kangaroo grass, sedges and roots of shrubs and trees. They cut their food with sharp front teeth which grow continuously.

Breeding

Mating occurs between September and December, and usually results in one offspring. The newborn wombat, which weighs only 1 g and is less than 3 cm long crawls into the mother's pouch. This pouch faces backwards to stop dirt getting into it when mum is digging. The young wombat will stay in the pouch for between 7 and 10 months.

Ducks at Kathner St Dam

Tree-breeding Maned Wood Duck have been observed raising families here previously, but this year ground-nesting Pacific Black Duck also seem to have tried this location.

Waterwatchers found two eggs. The first,

damaged, was floating in the dam at the end of July; the other turned up in nearby rotting vegetation in early August.

Our friendly experts at the Canberra Ornithologists Group provided advice on their likely identification. Particular thanks to Mike and Mark.