



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

**Newsletter
August 2019**

***Previous meeting
Sunday 21 July
Chauvel Circle***

A lovely winter afternoon greeted the working party on Chauvel Circle, with Natasha O, Doug, Linda, Malcolm, Rohan, and Natasha C all attending. Although cool, the sun was out and working on a northern slope, a five minute walk south of Chauvel Circle, was a very pleasant way to spend a winter's afternoon.

Most of the party worked on a large patch of *Verbascum Thapsus* (also known as common mullien) which is a native of Europe, northern Africa, and Asia. It is not surprising therefore that this weed is often found near and around rabbit warrens on Coleman Ridge, as was the case this time.



***Next Meeting
Sunday 18 August
Darrell Place***

Time: 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm

Meet: Darrell Place

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

Task: plant identification, weeding

Contact: Doug Tinney 6288 8589

September meeting: 15 September, Lincoln Place

Verbascum Thapsus has a long, tall yellow flower spike in the spring and summer, which traditionally has been used to produce bright yellow and green dyes. The flower spike also means that the plant produces prolific seeds which means that it is one of our most common weeds we remove from the ridge.

Other members of the party removed African Love Grass, *Eragrostis curvula*, which is designated as a major environmental weed in the ACT. The grass, which is native to southern Africa, thrives in semi arid, temperate conditions, and is also poor for pasture purposes.

Pleasingly, both weeds were relatively scarce in the location we were working on, and we were glad to see a lot of indigenous grasses growing well in this area of the ridge.

Natasha Cole

INVITATION

48th Black Mountain spring wildflower ramble

Saturday 12 October 2019 - 9.30am sharp to 12 noon or later

Belconnen Way entry just before Caswell Drive turnoff - watch for balloons

Celebrate the spring flowering on beautiful Black Mountain with a social ramble for wildflower lovers in the tradition established by Nancy Burbidge, and continued by George Chippendale. Discover the surprising diversity of tiny orchids, bush peas, wattles and billy buttons on easy bush tracks with experienced guides and good company. All springs are not the same. The pattern remains but timing and abundance vary with the weather. Friends of Black Mountain welcomes all comers, be they experts or those who have never slowed down to see the somewhat cryptic diversity. We plan several guides, with helpers, who will take different directions.

Please allow time to park and walk to the meeting point.

BYO morning tea, water, hat, sunblock and stout shoes.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL to ensure we have enough guides. Contact friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com or Cathy 0406 976 751 or Libby 6296 1936

Thinking of becoming a Parkcare Volunteer? The experiences of a new member

Like many people, I thought about becoming a volunteer for quite a long time prior to actually committing and contacting my local Parkcare group.

Being concerned about the environment, and wanting to contribute more broadly to our local Canberra community, Parkcare was the best fit for me. In addition, the Cooleman Parkcare group was a relatively small step

into volunteering, the commitment can be as little as a few hours a month, every third Sunday.

So, finally settling on a type of volunteering, I rather predictably started in January, just after the new year!

My first eight months with the group have been a great experience, and one that I would strongly recommend. Parkcare is suitable for everyone who can walk around and wield a digger, and doesn't require prior experience or knowledge about native plants, how to identify them, expertise in gardening or anything similar. The group members gently ease you into an ability to identify many native plants, and the weeds which we need to remove and control in particular. They start with the most common, easy to identify ones, and then gradually move new recruits onto the more subtle differences between some of the other plants, such as the grasses.

Perhaps what has surprised me the most has been my new appreciation of our indigenous grasslands. There is a very delicate, subtle beauty in many of the small plants and grasses which can be found in the Canberra region. What previously looked at first glance as just another dried out looking grassy scrubland is now rich with interest now that I know a bit more about what I am looking at, and observe much more closely the individual plants.

I knew that my knowledge was progressing when standing in a discussion at the last workgroup, I looked down at my feet and could recognise all three native plants by my shoes, including our logo, the Resurrection Fern.

Finally, the Parkcare members are a lovely group of people to spend a bit of time with each month, and freely share their knowledge, experience and expertise. If you're thinking of volunteering with Parkcare, please give it a go, and perhaps you will enjoy a new appreciation of our local environment as well.

Natasha Cole