



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
February 2025

Previous Meeting

Sunday 19 January 2025

Above Cut-drain on Mt Arawang

Thankfully the high winds of the previous two days did not eventuate and there was a sunny but not too warm morning for seven of us (Paul Sheils, Jenny Shapcott, Linda Spinaze, Rob Lundie, Rohan Thomas, Tom Babington and Nick Nicholls). As Linda cruised around from Darrell Place in her car full of tools [why has it taken all these years to come up with this idea?], the rest of us trudged around from Lincoln Pl to an area above the cut-drain on the north slopes of Mt Arawang. We clambered up to tackle stands of small trees (Tree of Heaven or *Ailanthus altissimo*) under a large eucalypt showing how birds spread seed via their droppings. We also mopped up some cotoneasters, Briar roses, *verbascum* and the odd fleabane. Another satisfying morning enhanced by encouraging comments from passing people.



Jenny, Tom, Nick, Linda and Paul display their trophies

Photo: Rob Lundie

Rob Lundie

Next Meeting

Sunday 16 February 2025

One Tree Hill

Time: 8.30 am – 11.00 am.

Meet: Kathner St

Bring: hat, gloves, water to drink.

Task: cut 'n' dab exotic weeds

Contact: Rob Lundie 0418291735

St Johns Wort (SJW)

A member of the community recently asked "What about the St Johns Wort??" I am so pleased that local inhabitants are concerned about this weed, and I thought that some information may be helpful. SJW has been in Australia for many years, but since the rains of the last few years it has spread exponentially over the lands of the ACT and NSW. It is a difficult weed to control. The following methods are being used on Cooleman Ridge:

1. Annual spraying by contractors using herbicide. This is done over December and January when the plant is in flower and is more easily seen. Some areas of Cooleman Ridge are being sprayed at the moment. Funds are limited so only a small portion can be done in any one year.
2. A few enthusiastic individual members of our Group use a back-pack and spray small areas.
3. Other members of our Group use a method introduced by the Mt Taylor Park Care

Group. This method consists of cutting the flowering heads off the plant. This can be done from spring to late summer. However, it takes quite a few years of repeated "head-removal" to have an effect. But, since many people are concerned regarding the over-use of chemical sprays, this is a very welcome and safe method. Recent approval by Parks and Conservation Service of the use of electric whipper-snippers by volunteers will facilitate this method. But it is still very time-consuming, and we need more volunteers to spread the load.

4. At times the Group manually removes SJW. However, this method is not recommended because SJW has many roots, and no matter how carefully we try to remove the whole plant, there are still remnant roots left. Despite the advice, we sometimes dig them up out of sheer frustration!

If SJW is spoiling your views of Cooleman Ridge, please join us in attempting to reduce its spread!



St Johns Wort

Photo: Linda Spinaze

Linda Spinaze

Art Exhibition



"Permeate" Watercolour and pastel on linen/cotton paper, 20 x 50 cm. One of 12 works by Artist Kirsten Wehner at her exhibition titled "Creek," showing at M16 Artspace until 16 February. Photo: Paul Sheils

We enjoyed Kirsten Wehner's company at several of our Sunday weeding meetings. Her Artwork "Permeate" I think captures the

essence of our contemporary caring activities for our part of the Weston Creek catchment on the Ridge. We sometimes made Kirsten's task more challenging when we would all disperse in different directions at our designated weeding area. We thank Kirsten for involving us in her project and bringing our group to the public's attention in the M16 Artspace. Her artworks will remain on display until Sunday 16 February; best to check their website www.m16artspace.com.au for opening times.

Paul Sheils

Tree branch down

A few days ago in early February I came across a large branch that had fallen across the Bicentennial Nature Trail from a beautiful Red Box (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*) about 100 metres south of the Old Dam. This is a popular walking and cycling track so beware of fallen tree limbs that may be obstructing the track. Thanks to PCS for clearing the branch.



Fallen branch

Photo: Brian Black

Linda Spinaze

Raining on the Ridge

2024: 652 mms
2023: 646 mms
2022: 1160 mms
2021: 1050 mms

Ridge Observations

"The ridge is a magical place for comet-gazing!" (Karl Gordon)
A couple of turtles were seen mating on a large rock at the Old Dam's water's edge.