



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter November

2009

Previous Sunday meeting October 18th

Our no-fuss AGM with Malcolm as returning officer brought no changes to the committee. Reports are attached to members' newsletters. We were pleased to have senior ranger Lara Woollcombe drop by, and she was able to meet more of our group.

The start of the Kathner St Nature Trail was a convenient site for the meeting which was bracketed with weed removal. Spring rain has encouraged lush growth, and the *Rubus parvifolius* (Wild Raspberry) seedlings transplanted on to the dam wall are off to a good start. They are well timed to halt the erosion that has been developing there. ☼

Future programme

Note that our summer programme, of Beat-the-Heat early morning starts, commences this month.

Next meeting, Sunday November 15th

- 8.00 -10.30 am
- GAS/Arawang – weed removal and plant ID
- meet on Namatjira Drive just before the Kambah Pool Road turn-off, or GAS/Arawang

bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, rain gear

18th November: Marist Boys working day (see below)

25th November: Gugan Galwan (see below)

11th December: Park Care Christmas Party. Venue to be announced ☼

Extra events – more help wanted

Wednesday 18 November - 20 Marist College boys will walk the Cooleman Ridge trails with us, collecting litter and learning a bit about the land. Start (9am?) with Sally McIntosh at Horse Paddocks entrance on Namatjira Drive. Morning tea at the Chapman School site. Lunch on Cooleman Trig. Finish at Kathner Street.

Wednesday 25 November - Gugan Galwan Aboriginal Kids at Risk Programme. Meet with Jo Donovan at Lions Youth Haven, Kambah Pool Road, 10 am. Focus is Kurrajong recovery after fire - day includes a walk to the top of Urambi Hills and bush tucker lunch.

Meet either group at any point - contact Arminel 6231 7392 or ryan@pcug.org.au for more details if you can join in the fun. ☼

Black snake

The season's first was spotted early in October.

Crepe bandages, everyone? ☼

Cattle grazing

A draft report on the fuel reduction trials on Cooleman Ridge and Red Hill was presented by Greg Baines, Wildlife Ecologist, on October 19th at Cotter Depot.

The Cooleman trial commenced in October 2005 and was to run for 3 years. It was to assess the effect of cattle grazing, slashing and herbicide wick-wiping on fuel loads.

Originally it was presented to us as a fuel reduction programme focusing on wild oats, with "wild oats" being a general term signifying exotic grasses. Later the focus was said to switch to conservation, aimed at determining if native perennials could be encouraged by reducing exotic grasses. It is now a PhD project, "wild oats" referring specifically to *Avena sp.*

Results appear to be inconclusive.

However that may be, cattle continue to be agisted on the Ridge every spring along the Equestrian Trail and in the original enclosure fenced off for them.

We greatly appreciate Greg presenting the report to us, the sympathetic discussion that followed and Sally McIntosh for arranging it.

Post script: the cattle are back, including 3 cows with very new calves, furnishing a challenge to undisciplined dogs. ☼

ParkCare coordinators meeting

Some volunteers have experienced threatening and intimidating behaviour when asking people to put dogs on lead, etc. Parks, Conservation and Lands request that volunteers do not make these representations on behalf of PCL.

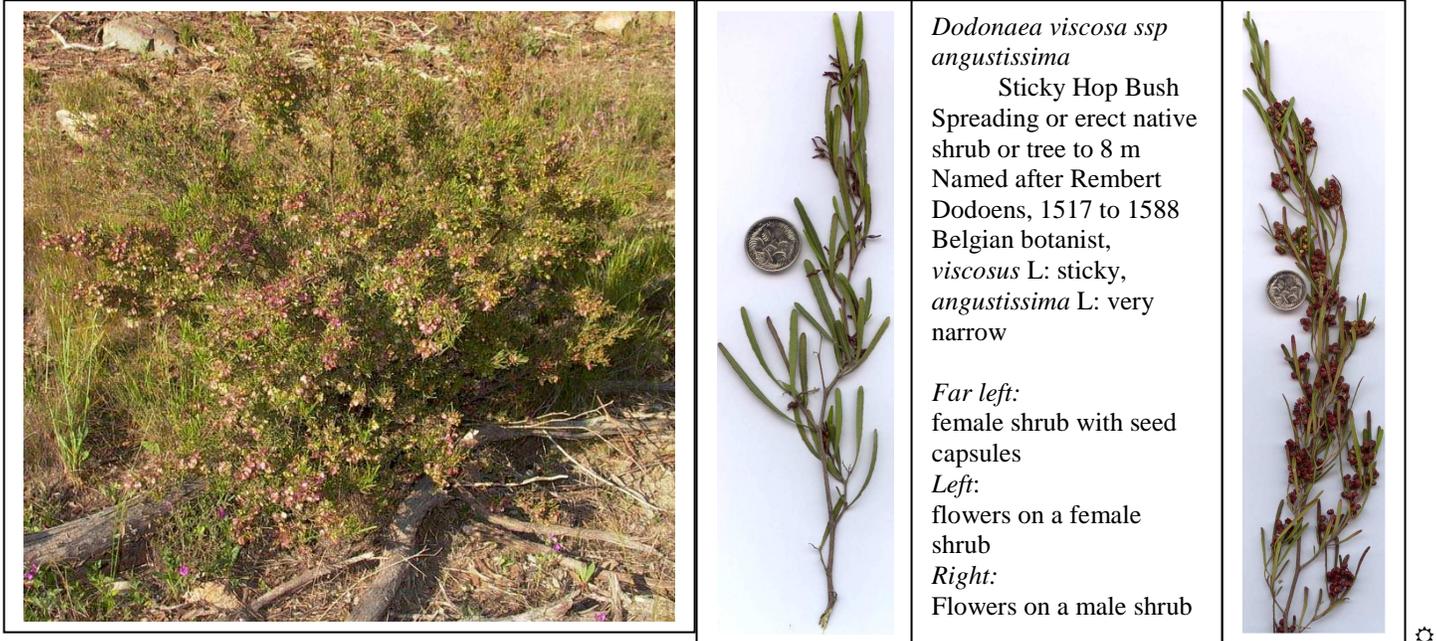
Intimidation of volunteers is not to be taken lightly. If any volunteers feel that they are being intimidated or at any stage feel threatened please report this incident to the community programs officer.

Cootamundra Wattle – To remove or not remove?

PCL's stance on *Acacia baileyana* (Cootamundra Wattle) is that it is scheduled as a pest plant whose propagation and supply is prohibited in the ACT. *Acacia baileyana* is not local to the Canberra region and is a highly invasive plant – PCL spent many thousands of dollars controlling it in bushfire affected areas after the 2003 fires. Apparently it can cross breed with local wattles. It was recognised that there is some resistance from members of the public when removing it. Community Noticeboards will provide an excellent forum for communicating the negative impacts of this species and are a good place to start educating members of the public. ☼

What's around

Family: SAPINDACEAE - *sapo* L: soap + *Indus* India



Dodonaea viscosa ssp angustissima
 Sticky Hop Bush
 Spreading or erect native shrub or tree to 8 m
 Named after Rembert Dodoens, 1517 to 1588 Belgian botanist,
viscosus L: sticky,
angustissima L: very narrow

Far left:
 female shrub with seed capsules
Left:
 flowers on a female shrub
Right:
 Flowers on a male shrub

Tree survey

Two of our park carers have recently joined the tree survey: Naarilla on Mt Arawang, and Paul in the Chapman School area.

Some results of the tree survey, Kathner Street area (No. 1)

A study of trees on Coleman Ridge was initiated in 1997 and we are now in a position to revisit the project and find what changes have taken place.

The ridge was divided into eight areas, each taken care of by one of our members. Area No. 1, the Kathner Street area, has now been surveyed for the second time and some comparisons can be made between the 1997 and 2009 data. Counts and conclusions are presented below.

1 Where they grow

	E pol	E mel	E ros	E bla	E mac	E nor	E sp.	B pop	Total
Top			2		3	3			8
Upper slope	6		2	1	4	10	5	2	30
Mid slope	23	6	5	13	1	11	3	1	63
Lower slope	6	2		13	3		1		25
Total numbers	35	8	9	27	11	24	9	3	126

2 Damage since 1997: mainly caused by the 2003 fires but in some instances also by drought

	E pol	E mel	E ros	E bla	E mac	E nor	E sp.	B pop	Total
Undamaged	2	1		5		2		1	11
Slightly damaged	15	1	1	13		2	1	1	34
Badly damaged	11	6		8	2	7			34
Dead	7		8	1	9	13	8	1	47
Total numbers	35	8	9	27	11	24	9	3	126

From this sample it appears that *Eucalyptus polyanthemos*, *E. melliodora* and *E. blakelyi* tend to grow on mid or lower slopes; *E. rossii*, *E. macrorhyncha* and *E. nortonii* higher up

It also seems that *E. polyanthemos*, *E. melliodora* and *E. blakelyi* have survived the fires better than *E. rossii*, *E. macrorhyncha* and *E. nortonii*. This may be due to differences in bark thickness,

Note that only trees with girth greater than 500 mm have been studied

Of the 126 trees originally surveyed in the area, 47 have died; 25 saplings have now grown big enough to be included in the survey.

Species found in the area:

- E pol: *Eucalyptus polyanthemos*
- E mel: *Eucalyptus melliodora*
- E ros: *Eucalyptus rossii*
- E bla: *Eucalyptus blakelyi*
- E mac: *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*
- E nor: *Eucalyptus nortonii*
- E sp.: *Eucalyptus* sp.
- B pop: *Brachychiton populneus*

size/age, and fuel type and fuel accumulation, as well as position on the slope.

A few of our members have taken on responsibility for some of the eight areas, but opportunity still exists for others to participate. ☺

