



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter December 2010

Previous Sunday meeting November 21st

Thanks to Doug for the bulk of the following:

There were six of us at GAC/Group Area Central today. Weather was very pleasant - fine, sunny, not too hot, not too cold. The ground was still moist enough for easy weeding. We had two new recruits in the group, two recent recruits and two old stagers – half of the party had come to us due to the notices Arminel and helpers place out each month, showing this to be our most rewarding membership source. Think of all the people out there with good intentions who never quite make it!

The oats and phalaris were shoulder height but surrounding the "meeting" rock and not observable from the track was around half to three quarters of an acre of very healthy kangaroo grass. It's the best crop Rohan and I have seen in the area. The bulbine lilies which have been dominant in previous seasons are still there but having to grow taller given the competition. Quite exciting.

I couldn't see any verbascum for the new guys to dig out so set off with them to topple some distant woody weeds (plums). But, heading into the oats we found lots of very healthy verbascum just below the height of the oats and quite obscured by them. So they got a good appreciation of verbascum and how big the thorns of feral fruit trees can be.

There was a substantial amount of flowering St John's Wort in the area, so the remainder of the party attacked it, duly protected by gloves and clothing. With two bags collected, Ingrid asked if she could take them home so she might infuse some oil with the flowers as it is a well known herbal medicine plant, besides being a weed in the wrong spot. You can make tea with it and the infused oil is good for abrasions and assorted skin irritations. ☀

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday December 19th

Note our reversion to early morning starts for the summer months

- 8 to 10.30 am
- GAS/Arawang, weed removal and plant ID
- meet on Namatjira Drive just before the Kambah Pool Road turn-off, or at GAS
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack. ☀

Family Fabaceae

This family is commonly separated into 3 subfamilies: Caesalpinoideae, Faboideae and Mimosoideae. Only the two latter subfamilies concern us.

The Australian plant family recognition tutorial at <http://www.csu.edu.au/herbarium/> developed by Geoff Burrows, Senior Lecturer at Charles Sturt University lists Fabaceae and Mimosaceae as constituting the 3rd largest family world wide, and that also holds for Cooleman Ridge. Our score is 19 Mimosoideae (including Acacia) and 18 Faboideae (Pea flower). In the present context he considers them as families rather than subfamilies as their characteristics differ.

Geoff Burrows lists characteristics for Mimosaceae as:

1. Woody plants
2. Foliage either bipinnate leaves or phyllodes (flattened petioles that can appear very similar to simple leaves)
3. Individual flowers very small, often yellow
4. Stamens numerous and free – they compose the conspicuous part of the flower
5. Flowers arranged into globular heads or cylindrical spikes
6. Fruit a legume (pod) ☀

Chelodina longicollis

Walking up from Chauvel Circle in mid November Arminel and Rob came across this turtle in the asset protection zone behind the houses: catastrophe – no camera! But Rob remembered his new mobile phone with its yet-untried capacity. Eventually he and Pat succeeded in wresting these images into the computer.



According to Ross Bennett – *Reptiles and Frogs of the ACT* – this Common Long-necked or Eastern Snake-necked Tortoise is the only 'tortoise' known to occur naturally in the ACT. It is actually a turtle, and 'tortoise' is used to distinguish freshwater land-dwelling species from the large marine sea turtles. ☀

What's around



Family Geraniaceae

above

Pelargonium australe – Native Storksbill

Perennial native herb to 50 cm high, softly hairy; stems densely covered with short non-glandular hairs; taproot ± fleshy.

pelargos Gr: stork,
australis L: southern

right
Family Asteraceae

**Gamochaeta calviceps* -

Cudweed

Erect or ± prostrate exotic annual herb, 0.1–0.2 m high. Leaves narrow-lanceolate to narrow-obovate to spatulate, 1.5–3 cm long, 2–8 mm wide, apex obtuse to acute and mucronate, base slightly stem-clasping, both surfaces white-tomentose
Native of South America



These two species, in addition to last month's feature plant *Silene gallica* var. *gallica*, are new to Cooleman Ridge. They have all appeared in the Kathner St regeneration area that was the subject of a control burn November 25th 2009.

President's doings

Friday 5 November - I attended a Woodlands Round Table Discussion, chaired by Dr Ian Fraser (NRM Advisory Committee). Thirty-three people were present, from a range of backgrounds - government, academia and such voluntary organisations as Birds Australia - besides a few Parkcarers and Landcarers. After an introduction by the Chief Minister, there were short presentations by Sharon Lane (Manager, Conservation Planning and Research), Dr Maxine Cooper (Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment), and Professor David Lindenmeyer (ANU Fenner School). It is encouraging to see such an interest shown in woodland regeneration and restoration. I have notes from the meeting for anyone who may be interested in reading the details.

Thursday 11 November - I attended the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's presentation at the ANU. I have the overview report available to lend to members, and am available to discuss the meeting with any interested person.

Friday 3 December - Chapman Drains project meeting with Ian Hickson, Lara Woolcombe, Malcolm and Gösta at Tree 404. The upshot is that the old tree will not be removed. It will instead be heavily lopped to ensure workers and fire crews are not endangered by falling limbs. Material from this Bundy, and from another *Eucalyptus nortonii* growing in similar conditions on the Ridge, will be made available to ANU dendrochronologist Dr Matt Brookhouse. Dr Brookhouse will then make an accurate assessment of its age. This will be the first such study of this species of eucalypt. Arminel ☺

Pinus radiata

In mid November Andy reported to Arminel that a 3.5 metre tall wilding was growing out of an installation on ACTEW land behind the cyclone wire fence surrounding the Darrell Place Reservoir. Arminel passed the details on to Lara who notified ACTEW. They inspected and put the removal of this pine tree on to the works program for reservoir maintenance: to be removed within the following 6 weeks. Its removal will be the 55th since the 2003 fire.

We all wonder how we had missed seeing it for so long, and it goes to show how valuable it is to have members keeping an eye on things. ☺

Road kill

Joel collected the remains that Arminel reported to Parks and replied:

"I picked up the carcass outside the Kambah Fire Depot and I am quite confident that it was a Swamp Wallaby (from what was left of it). It is not uncommon for them to travel up from the river corridor area. I have heard a few reports of individuals along Kambah Pool Road so I'm guessing this one might have ventured just a little too far." ☺