



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
December 2014

Previous Meeting - Sunday 16th November GAC Darrell

We were washed out! Vegwatch training was cancelled too! Twenty-five mil of rain in Pat's Kambah gauge!

Thanks to Linda S and Roger, who provided superb coffee and a dry retreat for some of the bedraggled crew that retreated from the morning downpour. Committee members were thus able to do some of the usual monthly business. Thanks also to those who came but went straight home again. We're grateful to Pat for bringing the morning tea we didn't need, and retrieving the signs vainly advertising the event. Finally, thanks to those who would have come but thought better of it!

Future programme

NB – Remember! We meet in the mornings during the warmer months!

Sunday 21st December Group Area Central (Darrell Place) RESCHEDULED

Time:- 8.30 am – 12 noon.

Bring:- hat, gloves, hacker, drink, Christmas snack, raincoat if it is wet.

Tasks:- Plant ID and weed removal. Inspection of Graham's present patch (near the lower Reservoir) now cleared of Cootamundra Wattle *Acacia baileyana*.

Plus Monthly Meeting, Christmas Treats & Freebies - locally sourced local plants from our local Propagators, Doug and Pat.

Sleepers Wake!

Your Committee has been touched and delighted to receive the following message –

“I suppose that I am a "sleeping member" or worse of the Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group. (For me to be more than this, these days, it would have to be a wheelchair friendly nature reserve.)

Anyway would you please continue sending the e-copy of the newsletter which I enjoy reading, among other reasons because it provides a link to a part of Australia with which I can connect. For example, when being driven along Namatjira Drive, I can look up to the trees that I helped to plant along the boundary and I can also look back to the times when I learned from Pauline and Gösta and Malcolm.

Thank you for sending the newsletter and please continue!”

Tony Fearnside

Deeds and Doers

The Wednesday Weeders continue wiping out woody weeds, especially **Celtis australis* (Nettle Tree). We've also found yet another **Asparagus sp.* patch. Crowns, anyone? Thistles (**Carthamus lanatus* Saffron Thistle on the lower slopes, and **Onopordum acanthium* Scotch Thistle higher up) keep us busy. We've again poisoned the **Vinca major* (Periwinkle) at the trig. George is taking a break, but Pat has picked up the slack.

What's around

Common Blue banded Bee *Amegilla cingulata*

Kingdom: Animalia; **Phylum:** Arthropoda; **Class:** Insecta; **Order:** Hymenoptera; **Family:** Apidae;
Tribe: Anthophorini; **Genus:** *Amegilla*; **Species:** *cingulata*

Seen here foraging on Lavender in a Kambah garden, this solitary native bee favours blue flowers eg. *Dianella spp.*



Photo P. Ryan.

cingulata from Medieval Lat. *cingulum* = girdle; belt; etc. from *cingere* =surround, encircle, ring + Lat suffix *-ata*

Distribution – Australia (not Tas or NT), PNG, Indonesia, East Timor, Malaysia and India.

References – online sources including the Australian Museum, Wikipedia, AussieBee and BeeAware sites.

Blue banded bees are about 11 mm long and have bands of metallic blue fur across their black abdomens. They can sting but are not aggressive.

Blue banded bees are solitary bees. A female bee mates and then builds a nest. Her nest is shallow burrow in clay soil (sometimes in mudbricks!) Many blue banded bees may build their nest burrows in the same spot, close to one another, like neighbouring houses in a village. The males cling to plant stems during the night.

Blue banded bees can perform a special type of pollination called 'buzz pollination'. Some flowers hide their pollen inside tiny capsules. A blue banded bee can grasp a flower like this and shiver her flight muscles, causing the pollen to shoot out of the capsule. She can then collect the pollen for her nest and carry it from flower to flower, pollinating the flowers. Quite a few of our native Australian flowers require buzz pollination eg Hibbertia, Senna.

Tomato flowers are also pollinated better when visited by a buzz pollinating bee. Researchers at the University of Adelaide are developing native blue banded bees for greenhouse tomato pollination.

Burning Issues

Hazard Reduction Burns took place at Kathner St and along behind Chapman on Thursday 27 and Friday 28 November.

Vegwatch & Botanical Business

Trainee Linda S. and Trainer Linda B. surveyed the Darrell Place Vegwatch site on 18 November. Pat, Arminel and Linda S. did the same at the Arawang site, on 2 December.

Linda S. has identified a lovely grass at the Old Dam as *Amphibromus nervosus* Common Swamp Wallaby Grass. Alan has established that the herbaceous plant from the cut-off drain above Chapman is a weed - **Trifolium angustifolium* (Narrow-leaved Clover). Other annual weeds we've noticed include a **Vicia sp.* (Vetch), and a **Galium sp.* (Cleavers).

Season's Greetings to all!

Watching Water

The team recorded no particularly unusual readings or observations on Friday 28 November (This was despite a major equestrian event Nov 22/23.)

Welcome to Tammy, whose Waterwatch training starts in December. With Sandy, a student from Canberra University, she's Pat's apprentice.

Watching the Birdies

Erika has raised 50 orphaned Wood Ducklings. Ten remain in her care, as do 4 Cygnets and 4 Welcome Swallow chicks. She's also released a pair of grateful Gang-Gangs.

Bamboozled

The renegade bamboo is sprouting again. (See newsletter April 2014.) Alan has notified the relevant authorities. Will there be another anonymous removal effort?