



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter September
2016

Previous Meeting
Sunday 21st August

Nature Trail/Pauline's Patch

Glorious sunshine welcomed us to our meeting place at the Kathner Street entry. Eight volunteers came - Linda, Gösta, Doug, Arminel, Pat, Alan, Brigitte and Malcolm. Our old enemy, **Verbascum thapsus* aka Great Mullein, was emerging everywhere. There was also some **V. virgatum* aka Stinking Mullein, lurking under the masses of hay from *Panicum effusum* - this native annual grass had had a good autumn crop. Conditions were perfect for pulling and chipping out the Mullein rosettes. Workers found very few woody weeds.

Purple-flowered *Hardenbergia violacea* was beginning to bloom. We saw a few insects and reptiles about - harbingers of warmer weather to come. A most enjoyable session.

Green Army Exercises

1. Lincoln Place Arawang - woody weeds and *Verbascum thapsus* Wed 24th August (Linda and Doug).
2. Kathner St Wed 31st Aug rained out – deferred to Wed 28th September.

Watching the Birdies

The Tawny Frogmouths are back at Kathner Street, and there is a Maned Wood Duck family of 8 ducklings on the dam there.

Next Meeting
Sunday 18th September
Group Area North - Chauvel

Time: 1.30 pm - 4 pm

Meet: End of Kathner St or at site

Bring: hat, gloves, hacker, drink, raincoat if it is wet

Task: Plant identification & weeding

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

Fringe Forum on Rabbit Management

On Thursday 18th August, Arminel and Alan attended this informative, well-presented session. Senior Vertebrate Pest Officer Ollie Orgill told us rabbits in the ACT remain widespread, and at localised high densities. Bunnies' impacts include environmental, economic and social aspects. Management options discussed were baiting, ripping warrens, biological control, habitat removal/modification and exclusion fencing. He stressed that no one method works everywhere nor in all circumstances. The ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy provides an overall framework. Monitoring is crucial for anticipating emerging problems. The aim is to reduce impacts, not simply record the number killed. Management challenges include knowledge gaps, urban rabbit populations, and resistance to biological controls. The Strategy and Best Practice Guide are available on the Parks website.

Alan

What's around

Acacia spp.

National Wattle Day was 1 September, but a walk on Cooleman Ridge any time this month is a spectacle of Green and Gold. Our Web Page Plant List includes 18 wattle species. In 2005, our September newsletter featured two of the 9 naturalised species - Cootamundra Wattle *Acacia baileyana* (many since removed as woody weeds) and the dainty *A. buxifolia*. This month, we feature Silver Wattle *A. dealbata* - a genuine local with international notoriety. It is apparently a serious invasive weed in South Africa.

Family - Fabaceae **Sub-family** - Mimosaceae **Genus** - *Acacia* (= spiky, from Gk. name of a thorny one) **Species** - *dealbata* (Lat. *dealbatus* = covered with white powder.)

Description - spindly shrub to small tree; suckers and coppices easily. **Branches** - silver-grey to dull grey-green. **Trunk** - dull grey-green or mottled. **Stems** - slightly ribbed, covered with short down. **Leaves** - compound, 6-11 cm long, silvery green to dull grey-green; densely hairy. 7-26 pairs of pinnae 15-30 mm in length, with 20-40 pairs of narrow leaflets on each, 2-4.5 mm long and 0.4-0.7 mm wide. **Glands** - prominent, one on the petiole and a raised gland at the junction between pairs of pinnae. **Diurnal rhythm** of pinnule movement in which the leaves open by day and close by night. **Flowers** - numerous bright yellow heads on stalks in axils of leaves on terminal clusters, Aug - Sep. **Pods** - purplish-brown 6 - 10 cm x 7 - 9 mm. **Seed** - black, oblong, 4-6 x 2-3 mm, longwise in the pod. Shed seeds remain viable in the ground for many years. **Occurrence** - Common in gullies and on slopes from 600 - 1500 m. **Distribution** - South-Eastern Australia from the Grampians, Vic to Tamworth NSW; also Tas.



Photo - Pat Ryan

Old Records

Birds at Tuggeranong, 1921

That summer, Victorian ornithologist Charles Barrett visited the Federal Capital Territory to investigate bird species. He found more than 40 species and believed there could be up to 100 species in all.

Barrett was based at Tuggeranong Homestead.

His observing 'began at dawn, when songs from the garden ripple through my dreams. It was good to be stirring then, to go down a rose-bordered garden to the creek, where Rufous Whistlers were singing. One Whistler favoured an almond tree, whose boughs reach over the homestead roof. Just over the creek, in the orchard, lay the haven of many birds. Flocks of Rosella and Crimson Parrots came every morning but rarely stayed long. The 'residents' included Black and White Fantails, Blue Wrens, Warblers, Silver Eyes and other familiar small birds. In

November, Bee-Eaters and Robins, both the Scarlet Breasted Robin and the Red-Capped Robin, were plentiful around the garden. Around Tuggeranong I found no glimpse of the White Cockatoos, but the species abound in the territory. I heard that hundreds had been poisoned in one paddock. "They are terrible pests" was the reason advanced for the destruction of beautiful birds. A sheep farmer, when I spoke to him of the value of the Wedge Tailed Eagle, smiled grimly. He laughed at words in praise of the Crow, holding it to be one of the worst of birds in sheep country. The man on the land does not always recognize his friends. It seemed to be news to the farmer that crows devour the larvae of blowflies, 'grubs' that fatten in the golden fleece.'

Jenny Horsfield