



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARKCARE GROUP

Newsletter August 2002

Previous Sunday meeting July 21st.

After two unsuccessful months, the weather decided to be kind to us. The sun shone and there was a pleasant breeze with the promise of spring in the air. We met at Malcolm's caretaker patch near the entrance at Kathner Street. Unfortunately Malcolm had the dreaded flu and was not able to join us. Two teams took up the challenge of removing *Verbascum* (Doug's forte with a lightweight digger) and the dreaded woody weeds. While Erica and Doug tackled the *Verbascum*, Tina, Katrina and Janice tackled woody weeds. The slopes above the Kathner Street entrance proved to be clear of the woody weeds but the team found one well-entrenched patch of *Pyracantha* and *Privet* hidden in bushes near the trail.

Next month we'll move further along and up the Ridge - to the Trig that is. David Mackenzie will show us around his caretaker patch.

The Sunday activity will be rounded out with a quick general meeting.

Coming Sunday meeting August 18th.

- 1.30 - 4 pm
- Coolleman Trig. Please meet at the Monkman Street entrance to the Park.
- bring hat, gloves, drink, snack, loppers or secateurs; spray will be available
- a brief general meeting will follow
- please note that children must not be close to where spray is being used but there is plenty for non-sprayers to do.

Programme

David Mackenzie will walk us through his area, pointing out his problems and explaining his solutions and aspirations. He has the 'urge to purge the spurge'. We'll offer David help as he sees fit, and then we'll turn to neighbouring woody weeds. ☼

Thistle Update

The April newsletter reported on the hunt for biological control agents for the thistles infesting Coolleman Ridge and particularly Mt Arawang. The good news is - the bugs already are here. The bad news is - they don't seem to be having any effect on the dominant variety of thistle we have, namely, the spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*).

In a mini-survey on Mt Arawang in April, Tina discovered stem borers in scotch thistles. About two-thirds of the seed heads in the scotchies looked at were being eaten by millipedes. We didn't expect to have millipedes coming to our aid but we'll take all the help we can get.

Unfortunately scotch thistles only make up about five per cent of the total thistle population on Mt Arawang. All the spear thistles looked at seemed very healthy and free of any insect invaders.

All is not lost. Insects which attack seed production in *Cirsium vulgare* have been released in Victoria. The rosette weevil *Trichosirocalus horridus*, following field trials in New South Wales, was released in Tasmania in 1998. The status of the ACT in the biological war on spear thistles has yet to be determined. Watch this space.

While a number of agents have been released to control various thistles, it's a slow process. Most sources advise that biological control is a long-term program best used on large, chronic infestations with a low priority for control. Hence, to see some results in our lifetimes, there's no avoiding grubbing and spraying.

Further update

"Thistle buster" Vernon Baily from the Red Hill and Mt Painter Parkcare groups accompanied Tina and Doug on an inspection tour of the infestations on Mt Arawang. He agreed things were fairly desperate but advised that with persistence you can get on top of the problem.

His strategy, born of years of experience, is to remove flowers and seed heads, place them in a rubbish bag and remove from the site. This eliminates the risk of thousand of viable seeds remaining in the soil ready to leap into action with the right conditions. Rosettes should be grubbed out.

Vernon reckons that digging out plants without removing their seed heads is ineffectual.

From the information provided by Doug it would appear that there is no easy solution to the removal of the dreaded thistle!

Southern ATC Catchment Group

On 23 July 2002, Dough Tinney and Janice Paull attended the meeting of the Catchment Group. The main topic of discussion was the proposal to develop part of the East O'Malley Ridge. Due to the level of concern expressed by the community, the ACT government has deferred the sale of East O'Malley until the review of the Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland has been completed. A workshop on Woodland Conservation is planned for Thursday 22 August 2002 (see item below). ☺

The issue of public liability insurance was also discussed. As advised earlier, the Cooleman Ridge Parkcare Group is covered for public liability insurance because it is now a member of the Catchment Group.

The next meeting of the Catchment Group will be held on 20 August 2002 at 4pm at the Tuggeranong College in Cowlshaw Street. Doug Tinney has kindly offered to attend the meetings if Janice Paull is unable. However, we will both be unable to attend the next meeting. Would anyone be interested in attending in our place? If so could you please call Janice Paull on 62883953 (H) or 6277 3799 (w).

Community Forum - Woodland Conservation

As part of the Government's commitment to the preparation of strategic, multi-species action plans for threatened species and communities, Environment ACT has commenced a review of the action plan for the Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland Ecological Community. As part of this review, they will be holding a community forum to enable community groups and interested individuals to participate in the process.

The forum will be held on Thursday, 22 August 2002 from 5.30 pm to 8.30 pm at the O'Connell Centre (theatre), corner of Stuart Street and Blaxland Crescent, Griffith.

The topics for discussion will include:

1. Introduction to the development of multi-species action plans.
2. Progress on implementation of Action Plan 10 for the Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland ecological community.
3. Definition of the Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland ecological community.

Pauline Lyngå, 6288 7009, gostaL@ozemail.com.au August 2002

4. Issues concerning forum participants.

Participants will be given an opportunity to provide brief presentations. If you wish to deliver a presentation please advise the organisers as soon as possible.

If you wish to attend this forum, please contact Marjo Rauhala on 6207 2114 by 13 August 2002.

Activity figures for July

Four members of our Group provided the following information for July.

Weeding phalaris, skeleton weed and clearing around plantings - 13 hours.

Attack on reshooting blackberries, thistle spraying and rosette removal - 6 hours.

Weeding euphorbia - 3 hours.

Five members attended the July meeting removing *Verbascum* and woody weeds for a total of 12 hours 30 minutes.

The total statistics recorded for July were 34 hours 30 minutes weeding, 4 hours providing administration and the newsletter and a total 4 hours (2 people) attending the meeting of the Southern ACT Catchment Group.

Contact Janice with your hours at the end of each month on 6288 3953 or e-mail at janice.paull@aph.gov.au Could you please let Janice know what weeds you are removing when you provide the statistics. This level of detail is forwarded to Ann Connolly. ☺

ACT Parkcare statistics

Ann Connolly has provided the following statistics for the activity of the parkcare groups across the ACT.

Woody weeds	761 hr 18 min
Other weeds	540 hr
Thistles	432 hr 35 min
Blackberry	151 hr 35 min
Chilean Needlegrass	146 hr 40 min
Other grasses	126 hr 05 min
Pattersons' Curse	120 hr 13 min
St John's Wort	80 hr
Willows	24 hr 20 min
Serrated Tussock	11 hr
African Lovegrass	6 hr

Total hours 2339 hr 36 min. Ann believes that this is an underestimation of the time being devoted to weeding across the ACT as information is not always available.

What's around

Family: SINOPTERIDACEAE

Cheilanthes sieberi is the fern of our logo



Cheilanthes sieberi

Resurrection Fern

Greek *chelos* lip; *anthos* flower. Refers to the lip covering the spore masses, *sieberi*: F.W. Sieber 1789-1844, botanist from Prague, collected in NSW for 7 months in 1823 - returned to Europe with 300,000 plants.

Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia

Rock Fern ☼

Latin *austro*: southern, *tenuifolia*: thin-leaved.

Cheilanthes distans (Bristly Cloak Fern) is less common on the Ridge. It has whitish hairs on the fronds. Latin *distans* distant - the leaflets are widely spaced.