



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter June
2010

Previous Sunday meeting May 16th

Six of us met in glorious weather to fill in volunteer feedback forms at GAN Chauvel. Then we turned our attention to the weeds, especially those in the drainage line above Reet's patch. The mattocks made short work of many *Phalaris* and *Paspalum* clumps there. Only one small St John's Wort was found this time.

A magnificent crop of Redleg Grass *Bothriochloa macra* now dominates the sections weeded on previous occasions. Lovely too are the many thriving bushes of Narrawa Burr *Solanum cinereum*, both blue flowered (see What's Around, next page) and white (see What's Around June 2009 newsletter).

New Markers for Self-Guided Walk

The Chapman Primary loop now has proper markers to replace the old star pickets. A big thankyou to the team who organised this and carried out the work on Saturday 8 May. We are especially grateful to Rangers Joe Clifton and Bernadette Brown from Athllon Depot, and to Rob Horsfield who made the pamphlet box.

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday June 20th

- Group Area Central for clearing exotic growth. Plant ID
 - 1.30 to 4.00 pm
 - meet at the Darrell Place entrance or at GAC
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack

Coming soon –

- Meeting after next - **Sunday July 18** at Group Area South (Arawang).
- Removing *Acacia baileyana* with Weston Scout Group (Joeys) scheduled for **Sunday July 25** at GAC Darrell – more details next issue. Helpers will be needed – please contact Arminel if you're available.

Ajay and the ants (3rd instalment)

Dr Ajay Narendra is part of the research team studying navigation strategies in Jack Jumpers (*Myrmecia croslandi*) in Hackett.

Arminel's account began in the April newsletter. May's article was about Meat Ants. This month's feature creature is the Sugar Ant.

Sugar Ants.

These ants have different sized workers for different functions. There are special small workers who look after the queen and large-headed soldier ants, as well as foragers. The foragers gather sugar from sucking insects (aphids, scale insects, mealy bugs etc). Using their antennae, the foraging ants tickle the insects. The pleasure must be considerable, for the insect then exudes a drop of honeydew for the caressing ant to harvest! When new workers are being inducted to field-work, an experienced mentor ant will lead a small group of neonates to a suitable tree. Showing remarkable care and patience, the mentor will advance a little way along the track, wait for the followers to catch up, and only move off when the followers tap her rear leg, signalling that they are all present and correct! Some species of sugar ant are nocturnal and these nocturnal species have more and larger lenses in their eyes and wide light-capturing structures.

Next month – *Bulldog Ants*

☼ Heritage Ahead

Next April will mark 20 years of park care on our Ridge. We aim to have a get-together to coincide with the Heritage Festival – probably in the shape of a Natural Heritage morning tea at Kathner Street. Please let old friends, helpers, interested parties and former residents know, or put Arminel in contact with them.

Tuggeranong Homestead Sunday July 11th 2pm
Women of Flowers: Botanical Art in Australia from the 1830s to the 1960s

Talk by author Leonie Norton, book sales & afternoon tea.

\$10 entry

Bookings to Jenny Horsfield on 6231 4535.

What's around

Family: SOLANACEAE



Solanum cinereum
– Narrawa Burr
Erect or bushy
native shrub to 1 m
solanum L: night,
cinereus L: ashen

La Presidenta's Diary

- 27 April - attended the Southern ACT Catchment Group meeting. Stayed for the informative illustrated presentation on turtles that followed.
- 19 May - attended Wanniasa Hills Primary School for the launch of a ground-breaking K-10 curriculum program and materials developed by the NRM Council in collaboration with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council. Its focus is the local land and the traditional land care practices of local aboriginals. Minister Simon Corbell did the honours and Aunty Agnes Shea welcomed us to country, explaining what the ritual meant and why it was important.

News Item from ANPC –

Want to be a plant hunter or collector? Try out an online starter tool - '**Australian Plant Family Recognition**'.

Developed by Geoff Burrows, a Senior Lecturer at Charles Sturt University, it's an illustrated tutorial and 5 interactive tests consisting of 20 images each. The tests feature high quality images and optional hints to the main features of the flowers.

<http://www.csu.edu.au/herbarium/>

Kathner Street Control Burn

Recovery Report 3 from Arminel

The "dead" *Acacia boormanii* - Snowy River Wattle - in Gösta's area is shooting from the base. The *Lissanthe strigosa* Peach Heath plants on Fence Post Hill are now regenerating from the roots – the clumps will be much larger as a result of the fire. Masses of seed is falling from the *Bothriochloa macra* Redleg Grass and *Microlaena stipoides* (see Photo B opposite). Many seedlings of *Austrostipa sp* Corkscrew Grass germinating. In most places, they must be from the 2008/2009 crop of seed – the old tussocks are still struggling to re-establish, having lost their seed crop in Nov 2009. However, the *Austrostipa* seed provided by PCL, which we are putting down in the drainage line as we weed, has also germinated well.

The effect of the burn along the roadside above Fencepost Hill is interesting. Weeds that we had piled along the fence were raked away and scattered there in preparation for the burn. It appears that insufficient heat was generated to sterilise their seeds. *Echium plantagineum* Patterson's Curse germinated en masse and enormous plants now flourish. By contrast, where the weeds had been piled up within the fenced area, and the heat generated was presumably greater, fewer weeds emerged and our weeding prevents their maturation.



A. 13 December 2009



B. 18 April 2010

Drainage Line Photos A & B – Gösta Lyngå

Note re B:- The brown grass is mainly *Bothriochloa macra*; the green mainly *Microlaena stipoides*; larger dark green plants in foreground are mainly *Echium plantagineum*.

Ins and Outs

- Southside Senior Ranger Lara Woollcombe is on leave. Joel Patterson is acting in her position while she's away.
- The ACT Budget included funds for the Chapman Drains Project, so it will proceed. ACT Roads has not yet called for tenders.
- We have a copy of the Kangaroo Management Plan & Consultation Report – these papers will be added to our Library.