COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter August 2010

Previous Sunday meeting July 18th

The President Reports:
Brilliant sunshine but soft moist ground made for ideal weeding conditions at GAS/Group Area South on Mt Arawang. Pauline, Gösta, Doug, Rohan, Jenny and Arminel concentrated on Aaron's Rod *Verbascum thapsus* (a bagful of seedheads removed) and runners of Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* sheltering under the clumps of pasture grasses. It's noticeable that where we previously cleared near the rock outcrop, there's now a healthy association of thriving Native Raspberry *Rubus parvifolius* and vigorous native grasses, especially Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides*. Weeds encourage weeds, while local native plants like to grow with other local native plants. Further down, there's a regenerating eucalypt tree that burned for maybe three weeks after the 2003 fires That is to say it was smoldering away below the surface and only broke into flame the Sunday Jenny was walking past it. We also found a Sticky Everlasting *Xerochrysum viscosum* in flower.
The toilers cleared several large patches of weeds, sowed them with native grass seeds, and scattered cut blackberry canes over the top to discourage grazers.

As the work party was close to the Ryans in Kambah, Pat was able to be official Tea Laddie, walking up with the thermoses at 3 pm. Malcolm joined us for afternoon tea, having walked over from Kathner Street, recording rabbit activity and warrens on his way.☼

More on Sunday

- A Weeds ID event at Fisher Parkland was attended by 6 of our members who came away with bolstered confidence regarding *Nassella tricotoma, N. neesiana* and *Eragrostis curvula*. Also demonstrated was the technique of frilling: an incision allowing herbicide to be delivered straight to the sapwood of a tree or its surviving epicormics, the Glyphosate mix depending on tree type.

- Several family groups branched off the South Summit Track at GAS, contouring along the steep hillside through the native vegetation to the south west.
- Malcolm and Doug found and removed our 54th *Pinus radiata* sapling near Arawang Homestead: 2.5 m tall. (Whatever were they doing over *there*?)
- First record of an *Eragrostis curvula* plant at GAS: removed and bagged. ☼

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday August 15th

- 1.30-4 pm
- revisiting the Euphorbia infestation. Removal or herbicide application
- meet on the top of Cooleman Trig
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet. ☼

Ajay and the ants (cont)

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.

"**Jack Jumpers.**
As the name suggests, these ants jump! They capture flying insects such as flies and moths, also feeding on earwigs, slaters and spiders. They have a nasty sting and some people might be allergic to it. How and why these ants jump is unknown and this is being currently studied at the ANU. However, a recent news report from the US suggested that jumping ants there use their mandibles as springs.

"Greenheaded Ants
These are common in suburban lawns. They raise not only their own young, but also the young of a remarkable parasite – a stick insect that behaves rather like a cuckoo! The stick insect's eggs look and smell like grass-seeds. These are 'harvested' by Greenheaded Ants. When the eggs hatch out, they look and smell like ant larvae, so they are raised underground with the ant brood, to emerge next season and repeat the cycle." ☼

Hours

Please remember to let Doug know your monthly tally of hours worked on park care: tinneydoug@hotmail.com

Doug sends the stats on to Sally who puts them to the best use she can.

For 2010:

January	150.5 hours	February	175.35 hours
March	104.5 hours	April	149.50 hours
May	123.30 hours	June	160.25 hours ☼

What's around

Family: ASTERACEAE – *aster* Gr. star.

Cymbonotus lawsonianus – Bear's Ear
Native, with leaves erect or spreading, ovate to lanceolate, to 25 cm long, 2–9 cm wide, entire or toothed; upper surface dark or lime green, pubescent or nearly glabrous, lower surface white woolly.
Heads 10–20 mm diam., peduncle 0–9 cm long, cottony hairy; involucral bracts 3-seriate, woolly, outer involucral bracts spreading, 5–10 mm long. Ray florets 10–20, yellow, corolla laminae 4–11 mm long.
cymbos Gr: boat, cup + *notos* back rf. convex back of achene
Dr Isaac Lawson d. 1747. Printed and helped finance "Systema Naturae" by Linnaeus

This plant is very prolific at present in lawns and on nature strips, and in the early rosette stage can be confused with the exotic **Arctotheca calendula* – Capeweed.
It is also easily confused with early rosettes of the exotic **Echium plantagineum*. In the latter case doubt is dispelled by checking the underside of the leaves for white woolliness.

One cluster, of only 3 Cymbonotus plants, has been found in the Kathner Street area to date. ☼

Welcome:

to John, with the Friday Weeders again after 3 years up North

to Cindy, also with the Friday Weeders. ☼

Spring flowers

Australian National Botanic Gardens,
Saturday 11 September to Sunday 10 October: 11am and 2pm daily
Meet at the Visitor Centre for free guided walks
No bookings required.
Enquiries: call the Visitor Centre: 6250 9540. ☼

Work party Sunday July 25th

Arminel reports:

"Weston Creek Venturers, Scouts, Cubs and Joeys, together with their leaders and some parents, helped us get stuck into *Verbascum thapsus* and *Acacia baileyana* near Darrell Place. Malcolm, Doug, Jenny and Rob lent a hand, providing supervision and guidance in the use of the diggers and folding saws. Ranger Bob Burdick also came by, very tired from a late night dealing with injured wild-life.

"Everyone seemed to enjoy giving the good plants more room to grow, and restoring habitat for birds, animals and lizards. By cutting down fire-prone invasive weeds, Cooleman Ridge becomes a safer place for bushwalking and bike riding. There was another benefit - all the kids gained points towards the various awards and badges that mark their scouting progress.

"Rain was threatening, so we gobbled the cupcakes and packed up early, getting home as the temperature dropped.

"We hope to work again with this cheerful and well-organised group of volunteers."☼

Australian Plant Family Recognition

As mentioned in June, this very useful tutorial was developed by Geoff Burrows, Senior Lecturer at Charles Sturt University
http://www.csu.edu.au/herbarium/

It was found that the tutorial could not be accessed using Internet Explorer. With Firefox 3.6 (free download) there was no problem. ☼

Environmental Law fact sheets

The Environmental Defender's Office ACT (EDO) has produced a series of eleven Environmental Law Fact Sheets. These fact sheets are designed to give plain English background knowledge of ACT environmental laws.

Copies of these updated fact sheets are available online at www.edo.org.au/edoact/, also by contacting the EDO office on 6243 3460 or edoact@edo.org.au. ☼

CommunityActionGrants

More information about the 2010-11 round is available on www.nrm.gov.au ☼

Walk and talk: trees of Mt Ainslie

Local ecologist Michael Doherty will be guiding a Tree Walk through various types of woodlands to remnant snow gums on Mount Ainslie.

When: Sunday 22 August, 2-4pm
Where: meet at Kellaway St/Phillip Ave nature park entrance
Enquiries: phone: Jeanette on 6247 7648 or email jlruxton@gmail.com ☼

Myrtle Rust

This is an exotic fungal disease that was recently detected in Australia on nursery production properties. It is known to infect a variety of genera in the family Myrtaceae. The pathogen has not yet been found on wild bush plants.

A Quarantine Zone has been enacted for Gosford and Wyong Local Government Areas. In NSW Myrtle Rust is a notifiable pest under the Plant Disease Act.

See: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust ☼