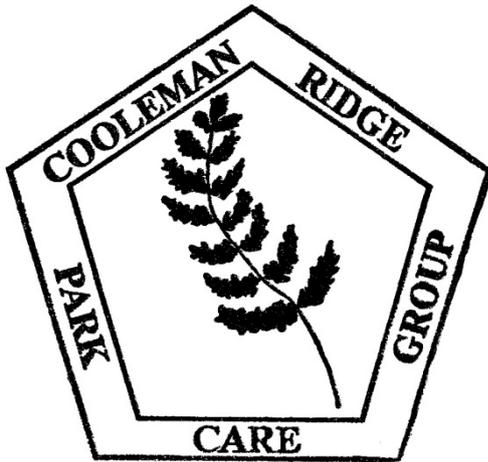


COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP



**Newsletter
January 2019**

***Previous meeting
Sunday 15 December
Mt Arawang***

Despite a dusty haze over much of Canberra, it was a very pleasant morning on which Doug, Rohan, Chris, Linda, Jenny, Rob, Gosta and Alan attacked the usual suspects of *Phalaris*, *Verbascum*, *Salvia*, *Blackberry*, and *Thistles*. It was very encouraging to note that we are keeping on top of the blackberry and verbascum on the lower slopes. However, all weeds are more prolific as you go up towards the summit. A good drop of rain in the preceding week made weeding that much easier and certainly the local magpies enjoyed an early Christmas lunch. Apart from the satisfaction of getting on top of the weeds, several walkers that we encountered thanked us for our efforts which was nice.



*Magpies move in after verbascum is weeded
Photo: Linda Spinaze*

***Next Meeting
Sunday 20 January
Kathner St***

Time: 8.30 am – 11.00 am

Meet: End of Kathner St

Bring: hat, gloves, secateurs, dabber-doober, hacker, drink, raincoat if it is wet

Task: plant identification, weeding

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

Feb meeting: Sun 17 Feb, Chauvel Circle

Following the weeding, Linda and Roger hosted a very enjoyable lunch for members of the Group. Thank you Linda and Roger.

Rob Lundie

Farewell letter from Richard Barnsley

Thank you and all the group for your efforts. Canberra Nature Park probably couldn't function at present levels without the community support we enjoy. I enjoyed having a few wins on Coolman - it's a nice patch. Please keep sending your [waterwatch] results and once a new ranger is appointed I will link them in to you. It will be terrific once we get the back dam fenced and some decent veg cover develops. Trying to get a new seat on the Kathner St dam before I go and hopefully another under the trees in the grassed area adjacent. I was checking our

spray operators working along the National trail recently and observed several tortoises in the back dam which is good. Cheers and a merry 2019 to you and Arminel.

Email to Pat Ryan from Richard Barnsley, ranger

Nice to be appreciated

Merry Christmas to all. Had a great stroll along the Ridge in mid November [and] it looks fantastic. For an area on the Urban fringe with so many recreational and leisure activities (both passive and non-passive) in addition to drought, a huge wildfire in 2003 and anti-social behaviour, it still fights on. Congratulations to the group whose efforts are appreciated by many. Keep up the inspiring work.

Email from Tony Brownlie, ex-manager Canberra Nature Park

Restorative Rain

Apart from making it easier to pull out the weeds, mid-December rain reversed the inexorable drying up of the Old Dam and the Kathner St Dam, the latter being completely empty at one stage.

Native spear grasses on the Ridge

One of the most common native grasses on the Ridge is *Austrostipa scabra ssp falcata*. A close relative, *Austrostipa bigeniculata*, is also present, but not as common. Both these send up their inflorescence (the flower head) in late spring, and by inspecting these we can easily distinguish these two grasses. As suggested by their botanical names, the awns have different shapes. Awns are the long "tail" on the tiny grass seed, and in this case, are at their most obvious after 24 hours drying on the kitchen bench. You will then notice that the *A. bigeniculata* awn does indeed have two distinct bends ("knees") in it, and the *A. scabra, ssp falcata* has a beautiful sickle-shaped curve (falcate). Arminel and Jenny recently brought some samples from the Kathner St weeding site, and I have scanned them after 24 hours so that the awns have assumed their distinctive shapes.



Austrostipa bigeniculata

Photo:Linda Spinaze



Austrostipa scabra ssp falcata

Photo:Linda Spinaze

Linda Spinaze

**Happy New Year and remember:
It's not too late to make a resolution
to join the [Coolman Ridge Park Care
Group](#). Everyone is welcome.**