



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

**Newsletter
February 2020**

***Previous meeting
Sunday 19 January
Darrell Place***

Eight of us started out from Darrell Place early Sunday morning, Alan, Gosta, Rohan, Natasha C, Natasha O, Paul, Clare, and Linda. Fortunately the smoke haze had greatly reduced, and it wasn't too hot. Also fortunately the rain that had been forecast was not evident.

Most of us worked on the St Johns Wort to the SW of Natasha's patch. We all used various methods. Some chopped off heads with secateurs and bagged the heads, some pulled whole plants out, and some used the long-handled shears to chop heads off and left these on the ground.

Rohan walked through Kangaroo Valley and dispatched woody-weeds (prunus and briar roses) with cut-and-dab techniques.

As I worked it was a pleasure to notice some small Australian forbes growing amongst the grasses. I saw the two local glycines, native geranium, convolvulus, acaena and epilobium.

A good morning's work. On the way out we checked Natasha's plantings. Sadly some have succumbed to the drought, but others look pretty healthy, although growth has been slow. The small kurrajong which was transplanted from a nearby patch is currently surviving well.

Linda Spinaze

***Next Meeting
Sunday 16 February
Lincoln Place***

Time: 8.30 am – 11.00 am

Meet: Lincoln Place

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

Task: plant identification, weeding

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

Mar. meeting: Sun 15, Mt Arawang

St John's Wort

Similarly I think that the St Johns Wort has been affected. Many of the flower-stems are brittle, and many of the plants are easily pulled out of the ground. Only time will tell whether there has been a reduction in plant recruitment. The CRPCG is continuing to focus on SJW. We are combining various methods of control as we try to work out which is the most effective. Methods include chopping seed heads off (both high and low on the stalk), pulling plants out, digging plants out, removing the seed-heads from the ridge and/or leaving seed-heads beside the path. We know that these methods will not eradicate the SJW this season, but we are hopeful that over a few seasons we will have an effect. Thank you to those who are doing their daily dozen (yes, we have asked for 10, but I'm sure most people will do more!). Every little bit helps.

Linda Spinaze

African Love Grass

Although we are all suffering from this terrible drought and related fire-season, there is some good news. I have noticed over the past few weeks that there has been virtually no African Lovegrass plant-growth or flowering this season on the ridge. Of course, part of the reason for the lack of ALG was the excellent contract spraying which occurred last November. But even the ALG in parks and road-verges is brown and dead-looking. It will be interesting to see the growth if/when we get rain. Will it revive and flower late in the season?



African Love Grass

Photo: Linda Spinaze

Linda Spinaze

Review of CRPCG activities

Some time in late February or early March (date, time and place to be determined), it is proposed to have a meeting to discuss aspects of the Group's activities. There is no set agenda at this stage but matters likely to be discussed are: the Group's weeding program; best practices for weed eradication; the newsletter (content and distribution); weed eradication campaigns; membership recruitment; conservation of the Group's archive; the Group's website. All members and friends of the Group will be welcome to attend and to suggest items for discussion. You can send these to the Secretary, Rob Lundie lundier@iinet.net.au You will be notified when and where the review will take place.

Linda Spinaze, President

Rare sighting: Golden Ant-blue butterfly

This Golden Ant-blue Butterfly (*Acrodipsas aurata*) was sighted on Coleman Ridge in mid-January. It is believed to be the first Canberra Nature Map record south of the lake. The adult butterflies of this species are dark brown on top with a metallic coppery colour toward the bases of the wings. Underneath, they are fawn with arcs of brown spots, and there are two black spots on both surfaces at the tornus of each hind wing. The butterflies have a wingspan of about 2.5 cms.



Golden Ant-blue Butterfly (*Acrodipsas aurata*)

Photo: Michael Mulvaney

Linda Spinaze

Working safely on the Ridge

All volunteer activities should be cancelled if conditions reach any of the below triggers:

- the temperature exceeds 35 degrees Celsius (bom.gov.au)
- the Fire Danger Rating is 'VERY HIGH' or above (esa.act.gov.au)
- the air quality is measuring PM2.5 above 107 (health.act.gov.au)
- the reserve is closed to the public (environment.act.gov.au)

Your safety is paramount and we also need to be extremely aware that our presence and activity in reserves has potential to start fires. Safety is everyone's responsibility. Even if conditions improve, if any volunteer feels unsafe or uncomfortable at any time, they have the right to cease all volunteer activities until things do improve. Thank you for working with us to keep our community and volunteers safe.

Alison McLeod, Volunteer Programs Manager, Parks and Conservation