



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter December 2011

Previous Sunday Meeting 20th November (Group Area South)

Blackberries! St John's Wort! These two villains have come back with a vengeance at Mt Arawang. We set to work again on "our" blackberry patch, trying to isolate it, remove the top growth of arching canes, and find all the tip-rooted outliers hiding under the long grass. The weather was damp with showers and storm clouds shrouding the ranges and drifting up from the Murrumbidgee. Poisoning wasn't an option – just physical preparation for a second onslaught when conditions might be more suitable. On the other side of the path (and the ledger!) Native Raspberry *Rubus parvifolius* is also flourishing and flowering, with the promise of abundant berries in the New Year. Tea laddie Pat provided a welcome morning cuppa on Namatjira Drive when the five intrepid workers knocked off.

Update on *Rubus fruticosus*

Weeds Ranger Jenny Conolly has arranged contract spraying of the Blackberries on Mt Arawang. We hope it helps!!



Photo A. Ryan

Trail repair on Arawang Summit Trail leading down from Group Area South.

Arminel Ryan ryan@pcug.org.au

Future programme

During summer, we meet in the morning, not in the afternoon.

**Next meeting Sunday 18th December
Group Area North (above Chauvel Cct)**
Access via Chauvel or Kathner St Car Park.

- 8 am – 10.30am
- Plant ID & clearing exotic growth.
- Wear long sleeves and trousers, strong shoes, hat and gloves. Flyveils may be useful too. Bring raincoat if it is wet.
- BYO festive drink & snacks to share.

Contact Doug 6288 8589 for more info.

Cattle stir things up

For months, our two dams have been giving similar Waterwatch readings. With cattle now having access to one and not the other, the results show a distinct difference in turbidity. At the Old Dam (site CMC 100), the November measure was 40 Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTU); at the Kathner St dam (site MBK 100) it was 9 NTU. In previous months, both sites were less than 10 NTU.

Brief reports

- Three turtles were seen in the dam at Kathner Street last month.
- Alan, Linda and Anna are taking part in the flora monitoring project designed by Sarah Sharp.
- A storm-water drain-cover beside the fire trail at Kathner Street has been damaged, perhaps by drains works machinery. A resident has undertaken to report the dangerous drop before anyone falls into it.
- Your committee has been dealing with a flurry of consultation on Operational Plans and The Centenary Trail. More on these issues in January.

Web site URL: www.coolmanridge.org

What's around

**Xanthium spinosum* – Common name Bathurst Burr - Native of S America.

(See Newsletter May 2011 for first report. This update and images provided by David Mackenzie.)



The maturing plant (right) at the Arawang end of the drain, survived the winter.

A flower head (left) started last summer, suspended its growth over winter and resumed development when it warmed up in November.

Below is a newly emerged seedling, coming through the erosion matting in November.

Plants of all ages have been found also at the Kathner St end of the cut-off drain and at many points along its entire length.



The nature of Bathurst Burr -

Two seeds are produced in each burr. For the most part, one is ready to germinate in the next season (or the next time conditions for germination are favourable); the other lies dormant for at least one more season and germinates, again, the next time conditions are favourable. Seed has been known to remain viable for as long as eight years.

BB responds to sporadic storms, so we expect serial germination throughout the summer. Flowering in the older plants begins around late Jan-Feb. Burrs will develop quickly afterward and plants continue to bear fruit until the onset of cold weather. Later emerging plants will bear fruit at a few weeks of age and only a few centimetres high. In a mild winter, some seeds germinate out of season and mature plants can be found at any time of the year. Plants quickly develop a deep taproot and can withstand long dry periods. Under harsh conditions, newly emerged plants as small as a thumbnail will cease growing, but when conditions improve, they will flower and fruit without increasing their height very much.



Spread –

The burr attaches to almost anything (socks, local fauna, dogs, horses etc) that brushes against it. Burrs float and readily wash down watercourses and drains.

Control –

Broadleaf herbicide has to be applied when plants are present. Responsibility lies with the contractor during the maintenance term. In principle, that term is 52 weeks.

Report all sightings to President Anna –anna.m.see@gmail.com

Pets and vets

We are still seeing more dogs off leads than on them. Reports of snakebite continue to come in – a cat belonging to a nearby resident is the most recent story. For the record, it survived – at a price.

What about the snake?

Backyard Fire hazards

Trees growing into powerlines are causing concern amongst some Chapman residents. We hear that ACTEW has been asked to inspect properties abutting the Ridge. Hopefully, the trees will be lopped or removed before the summer storms bring them into contact with the wires.