



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter July 2013

Previous Sunday Meeting 16th June Group Area North – Chauvel

“A perfect sunny, yet cool, Sunday encouraged twelve Park Carers to emerge from their winter hibernation and march up to the Ridge from either Kathner Street or Chauvel Circle to scratch and scrape away exotics and, unexpectedly, plant some *Dianella tasmanica*. The Forest Mint *Mentha laxiflora* and *Hardenbergia violaceae* seedlings planted here the previous session have all survived. Wild life emerged from under a clump of Phalaris in the form of a little brownish snake-like reptile that disappeared fairly quickly. The controversy is: was it a snake? or a pink-tailed legless lizard? My money is on the latter.”

Doug & Co.

Fleabane Begone on Furlough

The appeal to walkers to help us remove *Conyza sp.* along the trails met with an overwhelmingly positive public reception from those using the Ridge. At this stage, we're declaring the campaign over for the season. Thanks to Colonel Rob, whose initiative it was, and to Field-Marshal Anna, who gained the necessary approvals.

Re-training

Jenny has renewed her First Aid training. Recall ran the course. (They also train the park rangers and SES folk.) Arminel went to an Interpretation Course, with a view to developing suitable material for travellers on our section of the Centenary Trail.

Future programme

Next Meeting – Sunday 21st July Group Area Central – Darrell Place

- 1.30 pm – 4 pm
- Plant ID; remove exotic growth. Maybe some planting.
- Wear long sleeves and trousers, enclosed shoes, hat and gloves.
- BYO drink and snack to share. (The Kambah Tea Trolley is expected to attend.)

Verse for Volunteers

I am a weed buster, 'cause I care!
Rain, hail or shine, I will be there.
What is a weed? I hear you ask.
An invasive plant that can breed real fast!
A weed crowds out our native plants
That feed & house birds, marsupials and ants.
Weeds spread from gardens into the bush.
So come and join me in this push
Promoting native plants in gardens all around.
A weed buster I am newly found.

*Written by our Coordinator, Jasmine Foxlee,
at the ACT Parks and Conservation Service
interpretation training, 16 June 2013.*

Tracks & Trails

New tracks are being made for the Centenary Trail, keeping to easy contours and taking in the fantastic views to the south and west. Lots of local walkers are tramping the new route. Elsewhere on the Ridge, David the 'Dozer Driver has been repairing the horror stretches on various fire trails.

What's around

Typha orientalis

Common Name: Broadleafed Cumbungi



Photo – P. Ryan

Sources include WIKIPEDIA, PlantNet, Bush Foods of NSW – Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust, Encyclopedia Britannica, and Tim Low – *Wild Food Plants of Australia* (Angus & Robertson)

Family: Typhaceae

The genus name *Typha* may be from the Greek *typhos*, meaning marsh, referring to the habitat, or possibly *typhe*, meaning cat's tail, alluding to the inflorescence. Lat. *orientalis* = eastern

Description - This robust water plant grows up to 4 m high, shooting up from extensive rhizomes (underground stems). The stiff leaf-bearing stems end in a velvety chestnut-brown flower spike. It has separate male and female flowers. Male flowers are at the top of the spike and produce pollen. Female flowers are the velvety-brown areas 0-5 cm further down the spike.

Flowering - in the warmer months.

Habitat - Cumbungi occurs in swamps, margins of lakes and streams, irrigation channels and drains.

Distribution - Widespread across NSW from the coast, inland to the western plains.

Traditional Uses - Rhizomes, young shoots and flowers are edible. Roasted rhizomes give starch and sugars; leftover fibres make string. New white-green shoots are eaten raw. Young flower spikes can be steamed and eaten like sweet corn. (NB these and many other uses of *Typha sp.* are also known from Europe, India, Asia and the Americas. Starch grains found on grinding stones from 30,000 BC across Europe, suggest that *Typha* plants were a widely used Upper Paleolithic food!)

Landscape Functionality - Although considered a problem in irrigation channels and small dams, Cumbungi prevents erosion and provides ideal habitat for many native birds, reptiles and amphibians.

Fires, Wires & Foxes

Mt Arawang and the fire-storm of 2003 featured in ABC TV's popular science show, *Catalyst*, on Thursday 6 June. Amazing footage! Check out *Fire Tornado* on the ABC website

<http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories>.

A Chapman member has been worrying about trees growing through an ACTEW power-line near the Darrell Place Reservoir. Some official lopping has at last taken place, but hardly the 1.5 metres we are asked to observe in residential gardens. However, Elder Statesman Doug remembers that, after the 2003 fire, a big generator was put in south of the Reservoir, down where the high-tension line comes in, to run the pumps from the

control box there. He thinks that the coated single power line running up the gully through the trees would just be for monitoring equipment - domestic voltage only. Perhaps that's why nobody seems too concerned?

The Trojan of Titheradge Place reported (23 June) a large dead fox near the base track. A day or so later, he said, a posse of suburban magpies pursued a bushy tailed intruder up through the gate into the Reserve. Other workers and walkers have also mentioned fox sightings.

New Weed Poisonous to Stock

We've found *Celery Buttercup *Ranunculus sceleratus* beside the Old Dam. It's a Nasty. The relevant authorities have been alerted.