



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
January 2016

**Previous meeting (cancelled)
Sunday 20th December
Cooleman Trig**

As readers will probably recall, Sunday 20 December was a total fire ban day hence all Park Care activity was cancelled. However, Linda, Graham and Rob had not heard the news and were on site fairly early to beat what was expected to be a real stinker—and it was. Doug turned up a little while later to inform them of the day's fire status and so they eased their way back down the hill, weeding *verbascum* and *fleabane* as they went. The target of the day, *Euphorbia depauperapa*, survived to fight another day, but hopefully will be more vulnerable during the autumn flush.

Anyway, all was not lost as Graham took the opportunity to explain his new method of poisoning *verbascum*. Instead of cutting it off right near the ground, he cuts off the seed head and dabs the remaining stalk with glyphosate. No need to bend over and strain your back and so much quicker when there are lots of the weed around.

Also, Linda discovered *Digitaria brownii*/Cotton panic grass. This is a variable species with a wide distribution all over Australia, from wet sclerophyll forests to semi-arid shrub woodlands to hummock grasslands, but rarely seen around the ACT.

Centenary Trail Book Offer

On his way down from Cooleman Trig recently, Rob saw a book chained to the

Next Meeting

Sunday 17th January
Group Area North
Above Chauvel Circle

Time: 8.30 am – 11 am.

Meet: above Chauvel Circle (a shorter walk than from Kathner Street).

Bring: hat, gloves, hacker, drink, raincoat if it is wet.

Task: Plant identification and weeding.

In the event of a total fire ban, all activities will be cancelled.

railings of the bridge at the bottom of the track. It was the newly published *Walking and Cycling Canberra's Centenary Trail* and it was being offered for sale at \$30 a copy.

Always on the lookout for new walking books, he contacted the distributor, Bill Caddey (ph: 0406376143). The book contains well set out walking directions and maps of each section of the Centenary Trail, along with descriptions and photos of what may be seen in the area. Upon hearing about the Group, and with a whole room full of copies to distribute, Bill offered to sell it to any CRPCG member for just \$15 (half price). So, if you would like a copy or copies, send a request to Rob at lundier@inet.net.au. He will act as agent for the Group as this will make the process more efficient and easier for Bill. Rob will then collect the books and arrange to get them to you. Payment can be made upon delivery.

Rob Lundie

What is hopefully NOT around—Mexican feather grass



Photo: TAMS

The Mexican feather grass plant is a densely tufted perennial grass. It produces a lot of seeds and so can spread rapidly and smother native plants. It can be mistaken for the less detrimental serrated tussock grass and unfortunately has been sold in Canberra as Angel Hair Grass, Angel Hair and Pony tails. There was a recent sighting in the suburb of Fraser. If you see it on or near The Ridge contact TAMS or Access Canberra. We have enough weeds to worry about!

Source: [ABC News](#) 17/12/2015

Where do all the leaves go?

In a fascinating article by entomologist Ted Edwards AO ‘Where do all the leaves go?’, *Fronde*, no. 81, Dec. 2015, pp. 10–11), he discusses the role of specialist moth larvae in breaking down leaves. Through this process the surface litter, so important to soil health and to diversity of plants and animals, is created. The mallee moths are particularly important in this regard in our local dry plant communities. Ted is especially concerned that over-frequent burning wipes out all the creatures that break down leaf litter. He points to the unintended consequences of such a practice: the huge loss of nutrients, the selection for rapid-growing weeds, and the extinction of some plants and animals.

Arminel Ryan

Looking back: Noxious weeds in the Federal Territory

Our ongoing battle with invasive weeds is not new: the early Territory administrators were very conscious of the degraded state of the land they were responsible for. A Noxious Weeds Ordinance was put into operation in 1924, giving government officers the right to enter land where weeds were out of control or reaching the flowering stage and needing prompt action. In November 1925, a trial of spraying noxious weeds with an arsenic solution took place at Tuggeranong Station, on leaseholder land not far from the Murrumbidgee River. Harry Oldfield, the lessee, reported that that the arsenic had been very successful on the thick patch of thistles—‘they were dry as a straw’—and he burnt them. The five weeds targeted by the

ordinance were Bathurst Burr, Star, Saffron, Chinese Thistle and ‘Stinkwort’ (*Inula graveolens*). There was a fine of £20 if landholders failed to control these weeds.

Jenny Horsfield

What’s been seen at the Old Dam



Wood duck and ducklings (Pat Ryan, Nov. 2015)



Eleocharis acuta
(Linda Spinaze, Dec. 2015)

Happy New Year to all