



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
July 2019

**Previous meeting
Sunday 16 June**

Kathner Street

Six hardy souls turned out for the first of our winter gatherings. Although cool, the sun was out and the wind mercifully subdued. The site, which nestles at the end of the Ridge adjacent to the maintenance track and the Friday mob's really end-of-the-Ridge patch at Fence Post Hill, was showing the benefit of previous attention from Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group. OK, most plants are on a go-slow, being winter, but the phalaris showed signs of the attention Rohan has given it on previous excursions. And there wasn't a woody weed to be seen!

Nevertheless, Natasha O, Natasha C, Brigitte, Malcolm, Sam and Doug hand pulled a variety of nasties including the ever present *Verbascum thapsus*, loads of mustard weed *Sisymbrium officinale* and Paterson's Curse *Echium plantagineum* which was displaying something of a comeback. Other oddbods on the pull list included horehound *Marrubium vulgare* and the never-ending St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*.

Well done Team.

Doug Tinney

Next Meeting

Sunday 21 July

Chauvel Circle

Time: 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm

Meet: Top of Chauvel Circle, near entrance to the Ridge

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

Task: plant identification, weeding

Contact: Doug Tinney 6288 8589

August meeting: 18 August, Darrell Place

Discussion Group Outcome on *Vinca Major*



Vinca, has numerous common names including blue periwinkle, bigleaf periwinkle, large periwinkle and greater periwinkle. It's

widely planted in suburban gardens and inevitably establishes itself in Canberra's nature reserves. It's not a major problem on Cooleman Ridge but there are some outbreaks mainly on the houses side of the maintenance track.

How to deal with this common garden escapee recently was the subject of an innovation in the ParkCare community about pooling ideas and experience in dealing with weed infestations. An online discussion group labelled "ParkCare Brains Trust" is moderated by ParkCare coordinator Toss Gascoigne.

The consensus of the participants in the discussion was to mow the vinca with a brush cutter or similar device over winter, wait for the spring flush then hit the regrowth with a blend glyphosate at 15ml per litre of water and Pulse Penetrant at 5ml per litre. The Plus Penetrant is essential to overcome the glossy waxy coating on the leaves. Of course, picks and hand-pulling are an option but follow-up is necessary no matter what removal method is used.

Doug Tinney

Bush Regeneration Project – Cooleman Ridge

As reported in our April newsletter, one of our local Cooleman Ridge Parkcare members, Natasha O, has been involved in a project to regenerate a 1 hectare area on Cooleman Ridge.

The plot chosen is on the western side of the Ridge, facing towards the Brindabella Mountains, towards the southern end. The plot is sheltered, and off any of the major tracks on the Ridge. Like the rest of the Ridge, the site is still recovering from long term grazing and the 2003 bushfires. However, it has increasing numbers of young shrubs and climbers, which suggest that resilience of the eco-system is increasing.

Natasha has been working on the site for a number of months now, and has been involved in both removing weeds and replanting appropriate native species. Many of the woody weeds, including *Rosa rubiginosa* (Briar Rose), *Pyracantha* and *Prunus*, have been removed from the plot, and

Rubis fruticosus (Blackberry) has been reported to ACT Parks and Conservation. The populations of *Verbascum Thapsus* (Common Mullein) and *Conyza* (Fleabane) were greatly reduced. However, as always, *Hypericum perforatum* (St John's Wort) will take many years of effort to bring under control and Natasha is working patch by patch so that she is able to maintain weeding. Sadly this is true of the many patches of St John's Wort found all over the Ridge.

The next step in the project involved planting of species in the plot which are local to the area and which are absent or low in number on this site. Natasha has planted, or will plant, at the appropriate time of year: Red-anthered Wallaby Grass, Low Bush-pea, Early Wattle, Prickly Moses, Red-stemmed Wattle and Blackwood. At last visit, there has been an 83% survival rate. Kangaroos and wallabies have had a nibble but have not done any lasting damage. These plants will assist in returning the plot to its grassland origins, increase the shrub layer and establish some refuges for the local birds and wildlife.

Speaking of which, Natasha reports some unexpected visits from the locals. She saw, while working on the plot, kangaroos, wallabys, wallaroos, rabbits, scorpions, and array of bugs and spiders, and a noisy echidna.

Many thanks to Natasha for her hard work on regenerating this part of the Ridge.



Protection from the kangaroos – sticks used on new plantings

Text Natasha C and Natasha O, photo Natasha O