



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
June 2022

Previous Meeting **Sunday 15 May 2022** ***The Anniversary Seat***

A wet morning turned into a cool but clear afternoon, so a weeding party of five – Helen Govey, Natasha Newman, Paul Shiels, Linda Spinaze and Chris Oates - focused on a very large and dense infestation of fleabane (*Conyza bonariensis*) and verbascum (*verbascum thapsis*) around and behind the Anniversary Seat, on the Centennial Trail, above and to the north west of the large reservoir. We cut off and bagged the top seed-bearing stalks from the fleabane weeds, some of which were close to two meters high.



Fleabane (rear) & Verbascum Photo: Natasha Newman

Next Meeting **Sunday 19 June 2022** ***Darrell Place***

Time: 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm.

Meet: Darrell Place.

Bring: hat, gloves, water to drink.

Task: weeding.

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

July meeting: Sun 17, Lincoln Place.

We dug out or dabbed verbascum rosettes, often difficult to find in the long, recently wet, grass. We also cut off and bagged any remaining seed-bearing verbascum stems. Interestingly, many of the blackened and apparently dead verbascum stems still contained live seeds, so we had to inspect and remove them. All in all we carted 17 bags off the Ridge.



Chris, Helen, Linda and Paul weeding near the Anniversary Seat

Photo: Natasha Newman

Finally, we tackled a large pyrocantha bush further up the hill, cutting back most of its foliage. It can now be more effectively poisoned when new growth begins in spring.

Chris Oates

BNT versus Wombat

In the April Newsletter I reported that the wombat had resumed its burrowing under the Bicentenary National Trail north of the Old Dam. Trail and wombat seemed to be coexisting happily until recently when the roof of the burrow and the track surface collapsed. Back to square one for the track maintenance crew and the wombat. This battle has been going on for over a year now.

Rob Lundie

ACT Park Visitor Experience Satisfaction Survey

Soon you will notice signs on the Ridge encouraging visitors to complete an online survey about their experiences of the Ridge. You are encouraged to complete the survey as this will help ACT Parks understand who is using the Ridge, how it is being used and what the community thinks could improve their experience of the Ridge. The survey is open until 6 July and can be accessed through the following link: [please complete the survey](#)

Rob Lundie

Inquiry into Environmental Volunteerism (progress report)

The Group has made a submission setting out our experiences, issues and concerns as environmental volunteers. The inquiry had received 29 submissions by 6 May, including from the Southern ACT Catchment Group, the Jarramlee Park Landcare Group, the Ginninderra Catchment Group, the Hawker Landcare Group, the Friends of Mt Majura Parkcare Group, the Red Hill Bush Regenerators, the Conservation Council ACT Region and the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment. The committee would usually hold a public hearing and may invite people to appear before it. It may also convene a public forum.

We will keep you informed but you can find out more about the inquiry and the submissions [here](#).

Chris Oates

Verbascum on Coleman Ridge

Since the drought broke two years ago, we have seen a huge germination of *Verbascum thapsis* and *Conyza bonariensis* (fleabane). This has occurred all over the ACT and surrounding NSW country areas. I had been congratulating CRPCG on our excellent control of these weeds by the end of the drought, but it appears that the seed-bank was just waiting for the rains, and whoompf, they are now everywhere. Verbascum has two stages. The first year it appears as a leaf-rosette, and the second summer it will send up a spike of flowers, which develops huge amounts of tiny seeds. The plant is then supposed to die, but I have seen many re-growing from their roots. Fleabane is supposed to be an annual, but I think its growth pattern is similar to verbascum in this area. There appears to be no easy way of controlling these weeds. Currently we are focusing on removing the huge seed-heads in an attempt to decrease future germination, but it is a daunting task, since we need to put the seeding heads into bags and remove them from the Ridge. As spring approaches, we will need to either dig out the rosettes, or dab/spray them with glyphosate. Glyphosate is much more effective since manual removal always leaves remnant roots which re-sprout. Additionally, glyphosate spreads into the root system and prevents re-sprouting from distant roots. Interestingly, as I write this in early June, I have noticed some rosettes already sending up their green flowering spikes despite the cold weather. At this stage of growth it is best to cut-n-dab the stalk with a mixture of 50/50 glyphosate/water. There is no need to remove the flowerhead since the seeds are not formed and will not be viable. But there are so many verbascum and fleabane that it is beyond our Group to tackle all of them. Our policy is to weed small areas and try to keep these weed-free. This allows us to work happily with a feeling of success and without feeling overwhelmed by the task of the whole Ridge.

Linda Spinaze