



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter October
2006

Previous Sunday Meeting, September 17th

Our numbers were down, several people having told us that just this time they were otherwise engaged. This, too, was the day we'd anticipated getting started with reconstructing our walking trail, but as briefly mentioned last month the project is on hold till the route of the new access track is determined. We have since heard no more about it from either Graham or Rebecca.

We were astonished by the Bulbine Lily population at GAC/Darrell, only a few as yet in flower but promising a massive display. It makes it even more difficult to accept the dismissal of Coolleman Ridge as an area of low conservation value.

Twenty two of the 33 species recorded were native: in the October of 2 years ago 28 of 46 were native – what a difference a month and the prevailing conditions make. ☼

Future programme

We will continue to rotate through the three Group Areas (GA) when there is no special programme, meeting as usual on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 1.30 p.m. ☼

Next Sunday meeting, October 15th AGM

- Kathner St dam
- 1.30 - 4 pm
- meet at Kathner St, or the bench by the dam
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet

The AGM will be followed by a look at the slope where the new access trail is to be constructed. ☼

September log

040906 and 050906 control burn GAN/Chauvel to Titheridge Place

050906 Common Bearded Dragon Chapman Trail

240906 frog spawn in horse trough near Pound Paddock



Doug's picture ☼

From: Myna Matters Bulletin # 5

"CIMAG Monitoring Mynas Program

As our objective is to protect our native wildlife from the threat posed by the Indian Myna, a program of monitoring native birds and Indian Myna numbers in backyards and the local area is needed. This will enable us to assess whether our trapping activity is significantly reducing myna numbers and resulting in a return of native birds to our gardens.

Environment ACT has also encouraged us to establish such a program as it will also help them to determine the usefulness of a trapping program, and whether in the future they should complement our backyard effort by undertaking their own activity in public areas (nature reserves and open space).

In line with this CIMAG is looking to partner with the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) to monitor the change in native and feral bird populations

Members are encouraged to join in this monitoring program. For those who know their native birds, it would be excellent if you undertook to cover the full spectrum of birds — native and exotic. For those less confident a focus on mynas and starlings would be very helpful.

The Committee encourages participation in this survey activity: it is a major part of the strategy to assess the impact of mynas on our native bird population."

Contact: Bill Handke, (handke@grapevine.net.au or by phone 6231 7461) for information about the Garden Bird Survey activity. ☼

Water crystals

From *Planting Companion*: Gould, Greening Australia ACT & SE NSW Forests

[when planting] "An option (particularly for dryer areas) is to use hydrated water crystals mixed with the soil in which the plant roots come into contact. These are water absorbing polymers that swell up to hundreds of times their weight in water. They will retain water for extended periods depending on temperature, humidity and plant needs. Water crystals reduce watering frequency by 50-70% in potted plants, by 15-40% on lawns and 20-40% on veggie patches (Gardens on line 2001). As they hold so much water it is advisable to soak them for a few hours prior to planting. They should never be used on top of the soil as they can pull moisture out of the soil away from the plant.

Although water crystals add to the cost of revegetation, they are useful for retaining moisture around plant roots to help them become established." ☼

What's around

BRASSICACEAE – previously Cruciferae. The Mustard family



**Lepidium africanum* – Peppercress
Exotic annual or perennial herb to 70cm
Native of Africa

PLAN FOR COOLEMAN RIDGE CANBERRA NATURE PARK (continued)

The eucalypt woodland that clothes the Ridge is dominated by *Eucalyptus polyanthemus* (Red Box), *E. melliodora* (Yellow Box), *E. blakelyi* (Red Gum) and *E. nortonii* (Mealy Bundy). The last of these is mainly found on rocky knolls while *E. melliodora* and *E. blakelyi* are found on deeper soils of small valleys or outwash areas from the hills. *E. polyanthemus* is typical of the shallow soils of the rocky hills but is supplemented by *E. rossii* on drier aspects and *E. dives* on moister aspects. *E. macrorhyncha*, now uncommon, may have been more abundant in the past. It was a preferred species for sawlogs. Small *Brachychiton populneus* (Kurrajong) are sometimes found beneath eucalypt crowns. *Allocasuarina verticillata* (Drooping she-oak) is a small tree forming thickets on drier aspects such as those on the north (?) side of Mt Arawang. Shrubberies of *Bursaria lasiophylla* are prominent on the suburban side of the Ridge in the northwest and also on Mt Arawang.

The understoreys of the woodlands are grassy with exotics being the most prevalent. *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo grass), *Poa* sp., *Bothriochloa macra* (Red-leg grass) *Austrostipa* sp. and *Austrodanthonia* sp. (Wallaby grass) are common in places, however, while



**Capsella bursa-pastoris* – Shepherd's Purse
Annual exotic herb to 40 cm
capsa L: box or case, *bursa* L: purse,
pastoris L: of the shepherd
Native of Europe

cont.

there has been no formal survey an interim list of the Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group records over 200 species of vascular plants, many of them exotics (appendix A).

Despite the lack of formal study, there is anecdotal information on birds and other vertebrates (Appendices B & C) as well as plants. There is a small mob of Eastern Grey Kangaroos (*Macropodus giganteus*) on the Ridge which usually frequents the Mt Arawang area. Other than these, non-avian native vertebrates are rarely seen. In one of the 'farm' dams Longnecked Tortoises (*Chelodina longicollis*) were common but are subject to disturbance by domestic dogs, horses and foxes. There are also Common Brown (*Pseudonaja textilis*) and Red-bellied Black (*Pseudechis porphyriacus*) Snakes.

Note: the whole draft can be read on our web site ☼

High winds

Late September's violent winds have brought down very large branches from a couple of trees at the Kathner St end. A *Eucalyptus blakelyi* branch now blocks the path up the dam wall, and another branch, from an *E. Rossii*, has shattered higher up on Fence Post Hill. **So take care!** ☼