



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter March 2004

Previous Sunday meeting, February 15th

We were saved from the threat of heat stroke by cloud cover, but still took the afternoon very quietly. Ambling up past the Kathner St dam to our Chauvel Circle site we paused frequently to identify plants, checking uncertainties in Malcolm's Flora of the ACT. A surprise was to find the surface of the dam clear of the fern Azolla, having observed it in profusion two days before. There had been heavy rain earlier in the week but none Friday to Sunday. Not much weeding was done but we exchanged news and views. Doug commented on having found newly dead birds several days after the fires last year, presumably belated victims of smoke inhalation. ☼

Next Sunday meeting, March 21st

We look for an area for group care, plant some of the eucalypt seedlings taken from inside the Kathner St dam wall in July 2003, and commence weeding.

- 1.30 - 4 pm
- meet at the Namatjira Drive entrance
- bring hat, gloves, weeder, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet ☼

Conservation Volunteers on the Ridge - from Doug

The Conservation Volunteers Australia organisation approached Park Care groups with the offer of a team for attacking woody weeds for three days in February. We put our hand up and for the 9th and 10th around twelve people, mainly Koreans, chipped, cut and dabbed their way around the Ridge above Lincoln Place. I don't know who got the team for the third day, but by then the briars in that area which adjoins Arawang were in a state of shock.

The area in which the team worked was estimated to cover six to eight hectares and up to 300 briars were targeted. It will be interesting to survey the area in Spring to see the effect on the briars.

In case you were wondering, the CVA team was paid by the Southern ACT Catchment Group through the EnviroFund program "Weedaway". ☼

Future programme

Provisionally the year looks like this:

March 21st - Arawang, group area, weeding

April 18th - theme walk, details later

May 16th - group area towards centre of Ridge, weeding

June 20th - above Chauvel Circle, weeding

July 18th - Arawang, weeding

August 15th - Central, weeding

September 19th - tree survey, Naarilla's area

October 17th - theme walk

November 21st - Chauvel Circle, weeding

December 19th - waterwatch old dam. ☼

February log

130204 **Hypericum perforatum* chipped again FPHill. Previously chipped late December 2003.

Kathner St dam still covered with Azolla

150204 Kathner St dam surface free of Azolla.

**Sorghum sp* flowering on Kath. dam wall.
Scaevola albida, *Sporobolus elongatus*
flowering. ☼

Rabbits

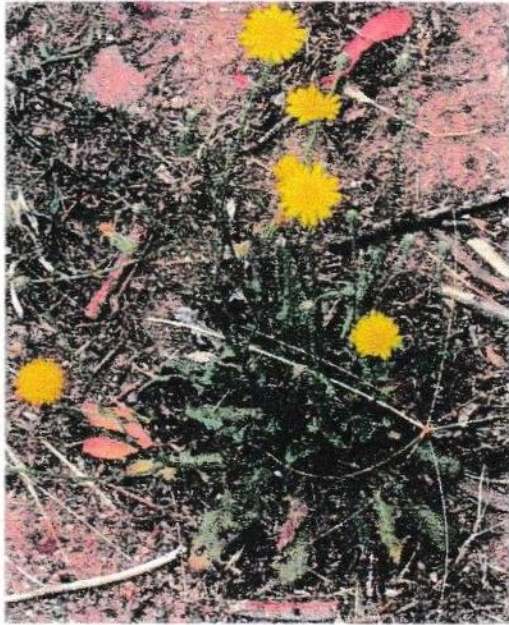
There is continued rabbit activity in the Fence Post Hill area and elsewhere. The massive warren in the horse paddock has been reported several times and Jenny continues to draw official attention to it. The vermin control people are side-tracked to fire duties and the fire season has been extended till the end of March. Steve Welch reminds us that the biological control relies on enough rabbits being around for the disease to spread among them; otherwise the disease itself will die out. ☼

Our own web site

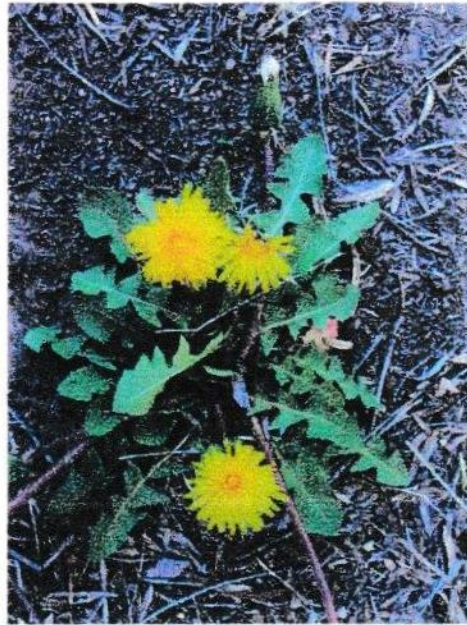
The address for the Park Care Group's web site is as follows: <http://members.iinet.net.au/~kPELLING/> ☼

What's around

ASTERACEAE – aster Gr. star. Previously Compositae; the daisy family



**Hypochaeris radicata* - Flatweed
Perennial herb to 80 cm
hypo- Gr: under, *radicans* L: root
Native of Europe



**Taraxacum officinale* – Dandelion
Perennial herb with taproot
tarasacon Arabic bitter herb, *officina* L:
workshop, factory
Native of Europe . ☼

Park Care Survey 180104 Results

A Tree Recovery.

- (1) Of 77 trees surveyed 6 (8%) were cut soon after the fires leaving 71 intact trees
Of 71 intact trees 2 (3%) were dead leaving 69 (97%) live trees
Of 69 live trees 6 were slightly or not affected leaving 63 live but affected by fires plus 2 dead trees leaving 65 intact trees known to be affected by fires
Of 65 trees known to be affected by fires 53 were in categories 2 or 3 (epicormics in upper branches) representing 76% of intact trees
- (2) Eucalypt seedlings varied widely in number from zero to more than 20 per tree
- (3) Flower buds had formed on new shoots of some *E. polyanthemos* (Red Box) at least.
This is very quick!

B Mistletoes

- (1) 24 trees had mistletoes (presumably from a possible 71 trees, ca 34%)
- (2) 87 mistletoe plants were recorded, 77 of which were dead and 10 resprouting: i.e. 88.5% dead, 11.5% resprouts.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

1. *Wahlenbergia* (Bluebell) and *Chondrilla* (Skeleton Weed) were found as tiny compact bushes in association with rabbit pellets. Simplest reason is heavy grazing/browsing by rabbits.

Fuel load

Our Group is fortunate in having many experts as members and/or supporters. In November 2003, Dr Joe Walker, a concerned Chapman resident, and David Mackenzie (Lincoln) took to the long grass of the Ridge. They worked in close collaboration with Malcolm Gill, and Gösta turned out with the GPS to record positions.

The resulting paper is to be reduced to 2 pages for distribution to all the householders with properties adjoining the Nature Reserve.

The purpose was to:

- assess the amount of grass fuel and its moisture content;
- demonstrate a rapid assessment method for future occasions;
- comment on the meaning of the results in the context of fuel loads in general;
- comment on the likely impact of grazing on rate of fire spread; and
- suggest some practical ways to reduce the threat from grassland fires coming from the ridge and into the urban area.

In summary, the authors state that grass fuel loads in designated grazing Area 1 (at the northern end of the Ridge) were on average 2.5 tons /hectare. Further, this value is relatively low and does not support the need to graze cattle to reduce fuel loads along the ridgeline. ☼

Stats

to Doug - phone 6288 8589,
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From Malcolm Gill. 14/2/04 ☼

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