



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter November

2007

Previous Sunday Meeting October 21st

The AGM was held at GAN/Chauvel and resulted in quite a lot of committee changes. See the attached minutes for details. We anticipate things going on much as before, with members helping where they can. Doug has been a well-organised and committed president for the last several years; we were fortunate Aminel was willing to follow him. Paul's chances of retiring from the treasurer's position (after 14 years) seemed slim, but Janice volunteered for the task in spite of her heavy weekday work load.

It was an exceptionally hot afternoon, well suited to savouring Doug's afternoon tea, and reinforcing our decision to schedule meetings over the summer months for the early morning with a flexi start from 8 a.m.

Yes, some weeding was done, while admiring the flowers of *Lomandra filiformis* and *L. multiflora*, as well as *Hibbertia obtusifolia* and *Goodenia hederacea*.

We first went to GAN in December 2003, then in February 2004, though we were not calling it that till May 2004. The plant count this time was very similar to that of October 03. In September 2006 GAN was included in a control burn. ☺

Future programme

Next meeting, Sunday November 18th

- 8 am or later, until 10.30 am
- meet on Namatjira Drive just before the Kambah Pool Road turn-off, or GAS/Arawang
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet.
- cutting and spraying the GAS blackberry patch. ☺

October log

301007 Maned wood ducks at old dam – 4 adults, 14 ducklings

301007 2 Eastern Long-necked Tortoises at old dam ☺

Fuel reduction trial

The cattle were trucked in from Mugga on October 4th. On 18th Malcolm reported: "35 weaner cattle in the trial area were to be augmented to 41 last Monday (6 from Red Hill) then all moved to the Horse Trail last Tuesday or yesterday. The cattle have disturbed the area around the water trough substantially. They have eaten back the *Indigofera* as usual but also appear to have eaten some of the *Paterson's Curse*."

David (Monkman St) confirmed that they had indeed been moved, and by the AGM Doug had seen them near Arawang. November 1st saw them roaming free on the Equestrian Trail from the gate north of the old dam all the way to Arawang. ☺

ACT plant census

Sarah Sharp writes that the census is now on the web, at <http://www.anbg.gov.au/cpbr/ACT-census/index.html>. This is the Excel-formatted list. It will be linked to the Australian Plant Name Index – preparation for this is underway at the moment. There are also moves afoot to provide a printable version so people can download a hardcopy. This version (i.e. on the web) will be the 'official' version of the Census. ANBG will be maintaining the checklist on the website, so that any additional species or name changes will be updated regularly. ☺

The introduced flora of Australia and its weed status

Rod Randall's book is an invaluable resource to everyone who cares about the Australian environment and wishes to ensure that the plants chosen for revegetation projects, landscaping and gardens are not likely to become weedy and a threat to our bushland. Every introduced plant species, past and present, in Australia is listed in this publication, with information on its weedy status here and worldwide.

To view this publication visit:

<http://www.weeds.crc.org.au/publications/index.html> ☺

Think weeds are trivial? Think again.

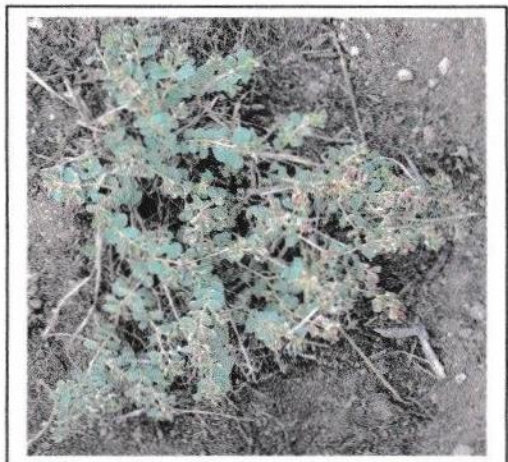
Weeds cost Australia at least \$4b per year - much more than the cost of salinity. It's roughly equivalent to the annual cost of illicit drugs to Australian business or the yearly value of our gold exports.

The Weeds CRC has compiled images of some of the worst weed infestations in Australia. These dramatic images show that the weed problem can become much bigger than your backyard. www.weeds.crc.org.au/main/image-gallery-index.html.

Distorted economics, coupled with ideologically driven decision making, is threatening Australia's best efforts to preserve its natural heritage, according to the CEO of the Cooperative Research Centre for Australian Weed Management. "The dominance of short-term commercial objectives in setting the national research agenda has been a disaster for environmental science", said Dr McFadyen. "It has left many of the scientific groups focused on public good and the environment scrabbling for support." ☺

Walk Against Warming

Sunday 11 November 2pm - organised by the Conservation Council and supported by FOG. Starts from City Walk. See www.consact.org.au. To know what politicians are up to on climate change take a look at www.thebigswitch.org ☺



Euphorbia [Chamaesyce] drummondii – Caustic Weed
Perennial native herb with prostrate, ascending or decumbent stems to 20 cm
chamai Gr: on the ground, dwarf + sycon a fig ☼

Lanyon High volunteers

On Friday morning, 9th November, we have some students from Lanyon High School coming so that together we can finish off the *Euphorbia depauperata* infestation on Cooleman Trig for this season.

We want as many adults as possible to be there, so if you are able to spare the time please join in. Loppers, herbicide and garbage bags will be provided.

Suggestion: BYO snack and picnic lunch.

Please contact Arminel: phone 6231 7392, or

ryan@pcug.org.au ☼

DRAFT: TOWARDS A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR COOLEMAN RIDGE CANBERRA NATURE PARK (continued)

Tree Survey

A survey of mature trees was instigated by the Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group in 1997. The aim is to record positions, sizes and health characteristics for the 1000 - 2000 trees in the reserve. The information is being stored in a data base. Future repetitions will enable a study of the development of the tree cover in the area.

Note: the whole draft, submitted in 1998, can be read on our web site. ☼

How native plants respond to fire

A talk by Michael Doherty with examples from the Canberra region, arranged by Friends of Mt Majura (FoMM).

Many people think that Australian native plants are 'adapted to fire'. What does this really mean? Local botanist and plant ecologist Michael Doherty will talk on the different ways that native plants respond to fire and how fire intensity and frequency and the season of burning can have quite different impacts on plant individuals and ultimately on populations.

Differences between unplanned fires (wildfire) and planned fires (fuel reduction burning) and the implications for reserve and urban-bush interface management will be discussed.

Wednesday 14 November, 7.30pm

Blue Gum School Friends Lounge, Hackett shops . ☼



Friday 26th October: CVA remove *Euphorbia depauperata* on Cooleman Trig

Euphorbia depauperata (see December 2004)

Arminel writes:

"The Euphorbiaceae (pron U-4-B-A-C) family is an interesting one. There are more than 200 genera in the family and more than 2000 species worldwide. The Euphorbias themselves are very varied plants. Some look more like cactus than anything else!

The one most of us gardeners know is often called Petty Spurge. This came into my garden at Kambah perhaps eight years ago, its small red-stemmed forests of plants like miniature trees probably arriving via some plant I purchased. Petty Spurge has green foliage and green flowers. It is an annual weed of nurseries and greenhouses, easy to pull out but very hard to eradicate. Native to Europe, temperate Asia and north Africa, the proper name for Petty Spurge is *Euphorbia peplus*. Its uses in folk medicine are suggested by its other common names Radium weed, Cancer weed, Wart-weed.

The large, tough plants growing on Cooleman Trig, however, would have been deliberately introduced to Australia. *Euphorbia depauperata* has big showy bracts and survives tough conditions, so some keen gardener no doubt imported and planted some to embellish his/her colonial flower beds. It is a perennial plant, of African origin, and has become naturalised in several districts of New South Wales.

Most Euphorbias have milky sap. They have been used extensively as sources of poison and for pharmaceutical applications. An example is *Euphorbia ipecacuanha* - a standby bottle of Ipecacuanha syrup, an excellent emetic, used to be part of every household's emergency shelf. Some spurges were used to stun fish.

Euphorbia depauperata shares this characteristic, although I haven't been able to ascertain just how caustic it is. I have found reference to *Euphorbia drummondii*, which also occurs on Cooleman Ridge, causing fatalities to sheep and cattle in Australia. It's advisable to use gloves and avoid contact with the sap.

Is it just a coincidence that this poisonous plant is growing around and through the stones of the unofficial cairn near the trig? We've been told that the cairn has been emolished but has mysteriously been rebuilt. It may have some ritual use." ☼