



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter April 2013

Previous Sunday Meeting Group Area Central (Darrell PI) 17th March

Six team-members made their way to the work area to continue their efforts on prior weeding activities. A few months earlier there had been a *Verbascum Vamoose* weeding session here which appeared to have had some effect. Very little **Verbascum* remained and the only evidence was of dead shrivelled **Verbascum* that had been cut and daubed or chipped out. Some members removed a patch of **St John's Wort* *Hypericum perforatum* which was then followed up by a spray. Others went to work on **African Love Grass* *Eragrostis curvula* along the vehicle trail. Some plants had died after being sprayed the last time we were there but some had persisted along with new young plants popping up. These were chipped out. This task will be ongoing - seeds will continue to be brought in on official vehicles. The best we can do is to continue removing them so they do not spread.

Fleabane Begone!

As part of a community education/engagement exercise one of our members has put together a sign encouraging walkers to pull out 5 **Fleabane* plants whilst on their walk. **Fleabane* *Conyza sp.* is easy to recognise and pull up. The aim of this exercise is to try and engage the community in simple Parkcare type activities and to encourage an interest in what grows on the Ridge. Keep an eye out for these signs!

Future programme

Next Meeting – Sunday 21st April Group Area South (Mt Arawang)

Meet at Namatjira Dr horse paddock entrance.

- 1.30 pm – 4 pm
- Plant ID; remove exotic growth, planting.
- Wear long sleeves and trousers, enclosed shoes, hat and gloves.

BOOK LAUNCH

A Labour of Love: Celebrating Landcare in the ACT

Friday 19 April

*Tuggeranong Homestead,
Richardson*

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

**Launch at 11am by Simon Corbell,
Minister for the Environment and
Sustainable Development.**

*\$25 from the Southern ACT Catchment
Group or at Nature Park Visitor Centres.*

What's around

**Verbena bonariensis*

Common Name: Purpletop



Scan A. Ryan

“Look out for this pest!”

Purpletop (*Verbena bonariensis*) is a very common weed of damp places. It is tall (0.6 – 2 m high) with narrow opposite leaves, a square stem and distinct dense terminal clusters of purple flowers. This species usually grows in combination with the weed Fleabane (*Conyza albida*), a tall scrappy-looking single-stemmed daisy, and other tall single-stemmed weeds. Purpletop forms a dense thicket in deep soils along watercourses. This concentration of herbage obscures the lie of the land and may lead to stock and personal injury, especially from soil slips and wombat holes.”

“Treatment and control

Manual removal of Purpletop may be the safest and most cost effective management, but may have to be repeated for several years, and completed in spring, before seed-heads mature. This applies to both Purpletop and Fleabane. Large, older plants may have to be cut and painted with herbicide (such as glyphosate), as hand-pulling may be too difficult.”

From Molonglo Catchment Group - Glove Box Guide: Water Plants of the ACT Region

Family – *Verbenaceae* and **Genus – *Verbena*** are names derived from a Latin term originally meaning the various sacred boughs carried or worn as crowns or garlands in religious ceremonies. The words are sometimes translated as “Holy Plant/s”.

Species - *bonariensis* is modern Latin meaning “from Buenos Aires” (Argentina)

Flowering – mainly Oct-Jan., but this specimen had produced autumn flowers.

News from the Small South Land

The Ryans’ recent trip to Tasmania revealed that there’s a line of varietal honey being produced by apiarists there, marketed as *Christmas Bush Honey*. It’s derived from the nectar of *Bursaria spinosa ssp. spinosa*. On our Ridge, Blackthorn *Bursaria spinosa ssp. lasiophylla* flourishes. Do any local apiarists produce honey from our sub-species? The Tasmanian product is delectable!!

For the diary

The Heritage Festival runs 13-28 April. The Conservation Council is running a series of walks in ACT reserves under the title **Natural Treasures of the ACT**. As part of this series, we’ve agreed to conduct a guided walk on Saturday 27 April (nb NOT 20th as per March newsletter). The box shows what has been advertised:

Natural Treasures of the ACT

Coolleman Ridge

When: Saturday, 27 April

10:30am-12:00noon

Location: Meet at the Kathner Street entrance Chapman

Did you know that Coolleman Ridge, like most of Canberra, sits on rocks 420 million years old? Learn about such fun facts and about the woodland, the wildlife and the history of the reserve by joining the Conservation Council ACT Region and Coolleman Ridge Parkcare Group for a walk in the reserve. For the keen nature adventurer a nature treasure hunt awaits!

Gösta and Arminel will be leading this gentle stroll around part of our Nature Trail.