



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter May 2013

Previous Sunday Meeting - GAS (Arawang) Sunday 21 April

Our previous working bee at Arawang was in December 2012. Since then we've had "*.. the driest summer in six years. Only 142 mm fell over the three months and a third of that fell in one day! (late January). January was also the hottest on record with an average maximum of 32.3 degrees.*"

(Catchment Update, Summer 2013).

We found the dire conditions had encouraged new canes on the *Blackberries *Rubus fruticosus*. Alas, however, for our native Forest Mint *Mentha laxiflora* seedlings – no survivors to be seen.

Four of the eight volunteers therefore attacked the same old blackberry patch manually. The other four (one a new starter) began by climbing up to Rohan's *Rowan *Sorbus sp.* (see newsletter May 2011 and *What's Around* this issue). Graham felled the pretty tree, with its reddening deciduous autumn leaves and plump, attractive fruit.

Late afternoon sunshine and chill air followed the retreating party down to the cars at the horse paddock entry. Hot drinks, with an array of nourishing provender, revived us all. After the usual reports and news session, Arminel presented Graham with a copy of the newly launched publication, *A Labour of Love* (see article next column).

STOP PRESS –

Coolleman Summit Trail

Work has begun on this steep, degraded and dangerous foot-trail, up from Monkman Street. This is welcome news indeed! More details next issue.

Arminel Ryan ryan@pcug.org.au

Future programme

Next Meeting – Sunday 19th May Nature Trail PLUS Pauline's Patch*

Meet at Kathner Street entrance.

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

**Last scheduled for October, but not actually worked on then. This will be a catch-up visit.*

Publications

- *A Labour of Love* is an attractive book that any ParkCarer might wish to have or give to a loved one. Erika, our librarian, has the Group copy you may borrow. Graham, our featured Weed Warrior, will autograph any you buy from Arminel's stash of spares!
- *Tuggeranong's Treasures – a Guide to Interpreting the Region's Heritage* is the latest in an ACT Conservation Council series. The booklet is free. It includes an article on our Nature Reserve, with photos by Group members Tammy and Pat.

Several of our Group attended the launches of these two publications. It's very gratifying to see them in print. Thankyou to all involved!

Talking the Walk – 27th April

Eighteen good folk attended the Heritage Festival **Natural Treasures of the ACT** Walk in our Reserve. Many thanks to the Conservation Council (who organised the event) and to our leader, Göstå. The weather was glorious, and the company both interested and interesting. Well worth the effort!

Web site URL: www.coollemanridge.org.au

What's Around/What Was Around!

**Sorbus domestica*

Common Name: Service Tree



Line drawing and botanical information from PlantNET. Other info. from various dictionaries & the worldwideweb. Photos Pat Ryan

Description: Tree to 10 m with bark shredding.

Leaves imparipinnate with 6–9 pairs of leaflets; leaflets oblong to oblanceolate, 3–5 cm long, 1–2 cm wide, margins toothed, lower surface pubescent and becoming glabrescent with age; petiole 3–5 cm long.

Flowers c. 15 mm diam. Sepals triangular. Petals white. Stamens 15–25.

Fruit obovoid or pyriform, c. 20 mm diam., greenish or brownish, with numerous stone cells.

Distribution and occurrence: Cultivated as an ornamental, rarely naturalized. Native of the Medit.

Family: *Rosaceae* - Lat. *rosa* = rose, from Gk.

Genus: *Sorbus* - Lat. = Service Tree. The genus includes the European Rowan, *S. aucuparia*.

Species: *domestica* - Lat. = domestic, native (as opposed to wild, foreign. Thus it is distinguished from the Wild Service Tree *S. torminalis*.)

Traditional uses: The pome fruit is a component of a cider-like drink still made in parts of Europe. Picked straight off the tree, it is highly astringent and gritty; however, when left to blet (over-ripen) it sweetens and becomes pleasant to eat.



Footnote – “Service Tree” has nothing to do with serving. It’s just a corrupted version of the Latin name. (OED)

Wallabies

17/04/2013: Walking in the afternoon on the lower slopes of Mt Arawang above Lincoln Close, Doug and Anthea came across two black wallabies (likely to be Swamp Wallabies *Wallabia bicolor*) and several specimens of a smaller variety which neither had seen before. They had lightish brown fur, a yellow tail and rump, and a hint of yellow on the shoulder. Their faces were white or very pale cream. Anna thinks they are likely to have been a variant strain of Red-Necked Wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*).

Welcome

Nearby resident Yasushi has been coming regularly to work parties. Thankyou for joining us!

Wahlenbergia sp.

Near the Arawang summit trail on 21 April, we observed a number of unusually coloured bluebells – almost cyclamen pink, rather than blue. A variant strain of one of our species?

Helping Hands

Lots of walkers seem to be pulling out *Conyza* sp. as requested. Thank you all!! Much appreciated!!