



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter January 2012

Previous Sunday Meeting 18 December :- GAN Chauvel

Seven early-risers marched up to the heights of the Ridge to the patch known as 'Group Area North'. Situated near the maintenance track located just above Chauvel Circle, this area is showing all the benefits of the second good season in a row. Growth is prolific, for natives and exotics. The team worked on removing heaps of Fleabane *Conyza albida* and uprooting the mass of Great Mullein *Verbascum thapsus* in the area. The morning was overcast and pleasantly cool for manual work. Quite uplifting.

In discussion towards the end of the session, La Presidenta Anna outlined a proposal to set up an observation plot that would be monitored every few months, or at least once a year. Members thought it would be useful to set up such a plot, probably at the Group site near Darrell Place. Given that this was the area due to be visited in January, Anna undertook to show interested members what was involved.

Future programme

During summer, we meet in the morning, not in the afternoon.

Next meeting Sunday 15th January Group Area Central (Darrell)

Access via Darrell Place Car Park, Chapman.

- 8 am – 10.30am
- Plant ID (Bathurst Burr; African Love Grass) & clearing exotic growth.
- Wear long sleeves and trousers, strong shoes, hat and gloves. Flyveils may be useful too. Bring raincoat if it is wet.
- BYO drink & snack to share.

Contact Arminel 6231 7392 for more info.

Weed Warriors' Whispers

Dodging the showers, Graham has been assiduously spraying the *Euphorbia depauperata* atop Cooleman Trig. He is very pleased with the results. Thanks, Graham!!

Bathurst Burr *Xanthium spinosum* continues to be seen along the drain and associated track works – remember to report sightings to Anna.

A number of members are removing African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula* as isolated plants appear near tracks that they walk. The infestation at the Darrell Place reservoir remains the worst.

Fleabane *Conyza albida* and the Mulleins *Verbascum thapsus* and *V. virgatum* are having a bumper year. There are also lots of thistles. However, the work done at Kathner Street during the drought to remove *Phalaris aquatica* and *V. thapsus* has not been in vain – pretty Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides* is now well-established in the drainage line; Weeping Lovegrass *Eragrostis parviflora* is abundant; and the Mulleins have not re-invaded to the extent evident elsewhere.

St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum* is rampant this season – not just in our Reserve. And we notice that enormous rosettes of Paterson's Curse *Echium plantagineum* have appeared along the verges of the recently-graded fire-access tracks.

Kangaroos show good breeding

There's reportedly been a 21% increase in the population of Eastern Grey kangaroos in the ACT since last year. In Canberra, kangaroos account for nearly 90% of motor vehicle insurance claims for accidents involving animals. Drive carefully!

What's around

**Centaurium tenuiflorum*

This European herb is flourishing on Mount Arawang. Both pink and white forms are present near the Summit Trail bridge above the horse paddocks – see Arminel's scan and Pat's photo below. *C. tenuiflorum* differs from the more robust Common Centaury ** Centaurium erythraea* in having no basal rosette.

Family Gentianaceae
(after Gentius, king of ancient Illyria, credited with discovering the medicinal properties of these plants.)
Gk. Kentauros – mythological beings half-man, half-horse. (The genus was formerly called *Chironia* – in Greek mythology the Centaur Chiron was famed for his knowledge of medicinal herbs.)
tenuiflorum

Lat. tenui(s) = thin, fine, feeble + florum = flowered



Drawing from PlantNET.

Description: Erect herb, mostly 20–40 cm high, basal rosette not developed or only weakly developed.

Leaves elliptic, mostly 1.5–4 cm long, 5–15 mm wide, glabrous; sessile.

Compound cymes numerous, the whole inflorescence corymb-like. Calyx mostly 6–8 mm long, usually at least two-thirds the length of corolla tube. Corolla 8–13 mm long, pink to red; lobes 3–6 mm long.

Capsule 6–8 mm long, enclosed in calyx.



Centenary Trail Consultation

We are hoping to have the re-routing of the Coleman Trig summit trail included in this project. (We've been concerned for years that this track is seriously eroded and dangerous, but haven't managed to find resources to fix it.) Thanks to Gösta and other members who are involved in this matter.

It's a cow! Water Watch Report

The sleek and healthy heifers grazing the long paddock near the Old Dam are causing much damage to its edges, and particularly to the native Water Couch *Paspalum distichum* growing there. Shame!!

Happy New Year!!
