



# COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter April  
2010

## Previous Sunday meeting March 21<sup>st</sup>

At Group Area South/Arawang we were exposed to violent wind which made it difficult to keep a hat on. Shelter could be found close to the ground but there it was uncomfortably hot. Few walkers were out and about.

The steps at the bottom of the Summit Track up from the bridge are being by-passed leading to increased erosion. The track itself marks a change in vegetation from weed infestation to the east and native grassland to the west. Alan has the good sense to work on the western side where progress is discernable. To the east exotics, particularly grasses, predominate making it the least encouraging of our group areas. Although we found no *Echium plantagineum* and little *Chondrilla juncea*, there is a much poorer spread and variety of native grasses than at Kathner St. As elsewhere *Eragrostis cilianensis* is thriving. The recently-sprayed blackberry thicket was producing new runners and two loads of canes were cut and carted away.

On the positive side *Cheilanthes* sp. and *Chenopodium pumilio* are growing vigorously and *Solanum cinereum* is spreading.

So there are positives to counteract any pessimism, but one thing is certain: GAS/Arawang is in dire need of a team of dedicated caretakers. ☼

## Future programme

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April**, 5.30 for 6 pm start, Havelock House  
Member forum: Canberra Nature Park – our special reserves  
Contact: Anna See, Project Officer, Conservation Council ACT  
Region, 6229 3210, [bushcare@consact.org.au](mailto:bushcare@consact.org.au)

### Next meeting, Sunday April 18<sup>th</sup>

- Nature Trail maintenance. Plant ID
- meet at the Kathner St entrance, or on the Trail
- bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink,
- 1.30 to 4.00 pm

*Our carefully planned Nature Trail routed to avoid the treacherous Yellow Brick Road has been sabotaged by Nature itself. Vigorous regrowth makes the track difficult to follow and a diminishing number of walkers choose that way. But we'll improve it.*

*We have now repainted the signage and started chipping away the invading plants: on ParkCare Sunday this month, there will be a concerted effort to make the path through the *Bothriochloa* and *Themeda* fields easy to find and a joy to follow. So bring your hackers and get to work.* Gösta ☼

## Kathner Street

We continue to document the recovery from the control burn of 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

*Cynoglossum suaveolens*, *Digitaria brownii*, \**Eragrostis cilianensis*, *Eragrostis parviflora* and \**Tribulus terrestris*, not remembered from before the burn-off, have appeared.

*Solanum cinereum*, *Chenopodium pumilio*, *Bothriochloa macra* are prolific, as are the exotics *Echium plantagineum* and *Chondrilla juncea*.

A squeeze-through was constructed by PLC early in March to by-pass the intermittently locked gate across the Nature Trail between the start and Post 1.

Gösta removed stones marking the final section of the Walking Trail so they do not impede the slasher. Senior Ranger Lara Woollcombe will see if yellow gravel, as was used for the access road, can be spread on this section to mark it instead of the stones, sometime this winter.

The threatening yellow paint spots on trees proved benign: they mark surveyor's points.

This year's saturating rain resulted in a creek running towards Kathner St dam. The boggy ground is drying out now, but we don't remember it having been as wet since the mid 1990s when Rotary helped us with a path and drainage at the start of the Nature Trail.

Erosion is being monitored and addressed. ☼

## Mynas

ANU PhD candidate Kate Garrock is doing a research project on mynas, their impact and the effectiveness of the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group's trapping program. The number of myna eggs and chicks in her nesting boxes in the reserves has been much higher than in the previous year.

CIMAG is launching a monitoring program on mynas:

*The Garden Survey Method* is very simple and involves counting the number of mynas seen within a 100 metre radius of your house at any one time during a week.

*The Transect Count Method* involves walking the same route for a 2km distance and counting the mynas seen.

For more information contact Bruce Lindenmayer on 6288 5957. ☼

## What's around

Family: POACEAE



*Dichanthium sericeum* – Queensland Blue Grass  
Erect perennial native to 1.2 m high  
dicha Gr: in two, anthos Gr: flower,  
sericeus L: silken



*Eragrostis parviflora* – Weeping Lovegrass  
Tufted native annual grass to 1.1 m high  
*eros* Gr: love, *agrostis* Gr: grass  
*parvus* L: small, *floris* L: flower

## AJAY AND THE ANTS

On Mt Majura in February Arminel joined a group organised by Waltraud Pix and led by the lively young ANU myrmecologist, Dr. Ajay Narendra. Ajay used a few of the 45 species of ant found on Mount Majura to illustrate his subject.

*From Arminel's notes:*

Australia has around 1,200 species of ant. Ants have evolved from a wasp-like ancestor, but differ from wasps (and bees) in three visible anatomical features:

- their flexible, conical “waist”, which allows their rear section, called a *gaster* to flex
- “elbows” in their feelers
- a metapleural gland that produces antibiotics that help to prevent the growth of bacteria, fungus, spores on the ant and in its nest.

In common with some kinds of wasps and bees, certain ant stings can hurt animals much larger than themselves, but most are harmless to humans.

Nests of Meat Ants, Sugar Ants, Bulldog Ants and Jack Jumpers were studied.

*Wait till May for the next episode.* ☼

## Genus *Eragrostis* - Lovegrasses

There are about 300 species world wide and about 66 in Australia. The Flora of NSW lists 33. The ACT census lists 8: of these 6 have been collected on Cooleman Ridge. (See *\*Eragrostis cilianensis*, *\*Eragrostis curvula*, *\*Eragrostis pilosa*, *Eragrostis trachycarpa* in Newsletters March and April 2008, February 2009.) *\*E. pilosa* has also been found.

To distinguish the native *E. parviflora* from the aggressive *\*E. curvula* measure the length of the pedicel (stalk of spikelet), spikelet (small spike of one or more florets), and count the number of florets (flower unit).

*\*E. curvula*: pedicels 0.5 to 4 mm long, number of florets 4 to 14.

*E. parviflora*: pedicels to 8mm long, number of florets 8-18.

Lara has told us that on Cooleman Ridge *E. curvula* has been sprayed 2008/2009 and 2009/2010. PCL intends to continue to do this annually, resources permitting.

There is to be a workshop on managing *E. curvula* (African Lovegrass) 22<sup>nd</sup> May at the Namadgi Visitor Centre.

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