COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter December

2008

Previous Sunday meeting November16

This, the first of our early morning summer work parties, was gratifyingly well attended. One high-flying holidaymaker touched down in Canberra just long enough to take part before resuming his journeying.

Our target was *Euphorbia* - . Spurge. We are calling it *E. depauperata* till we get it identified (could it be *E. polychroma?*) It has been infesting the top of Cooleman Trig for many years despite the efforts of one of our caretakers, and several group blitzes. In October last year we had the help of a CVA team. How encouraging, then, to find that the colony is shrinking. When once a couple of plants were found at the northern end of Cooleman Ridge we knew to take immediate action (in the shape of cutting and dabbing) and there has been no recurrence.

This time many of the perimeter plants could be hand-pulled quite easily. Where it was clustering densely with long, tough roots twisting under rocks it was cut and dabbed. Then it was bagged and driven to Green Waste.

Next year we will be back.☼

Future programme

Please note that during the coming summer months of December **(14th!!!)**, January and February we will, as in previous years, meet at 8am.

Next meeting, Sunday December 14th

- GAC/Darrell – weed removal and plant ID.
- **8.00-10.30am**
- meet at Darrell Place, or GAC/Darrell
- as usual bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet.

And also bring a mug, and a foretaste of Christmas to share for morning tea.☼

Action on Arawang

In January we'll meet at GAS/Arawang, and the news is good. Jenny writes December 2nd: *"They seem to have sprayed blackberry on Arawang. I saw big red patches from the car and went for a walk this afternoon on the fire trail. Firethorn and rosehip, and all the big blackberry patches have been targeted"*

Anne I'Ons reports that welcome spraying has also been carried out on Mt Taylor.

It is encouraging to know that there is funding for this vital activity.☼

A cacophony of cockatoos

Arminel reports on a Friday morning in November: *"Out in the horse-paddocks, about 10 am, there was a sudden clamour of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos screeching. It was loud enough and sustained enough for all of us to notice it, and I looked across to see where it was coming from.*
"There was a big tree maybe 750m away and the cockies were wheeling around near it and swooping and carrying on, but it was too far away to see why. The behaviour continued and the flock came towards the Ridge. Then the object of their cursing appeared near the Kathner Street dam - a fox! The cockies herded it up onto the Ridge, swearing at it all the way."

In spite of the fox, a large hare has recently been seen on that slope.☼

Seeds

When Arminel isn't watching cockatoos she's reading the *Canberra Times*. Thanks for this synopsis.

"In Times 2 on Thursday 30th October Rosslyn Beeby wrote an article (Kosciusko's Seedy Side) of some research on seeds picked up in socks in Kosciusko National Park.

"The researchers are ecologist Dr Catherine Pickering, from the International Centre for Ecotourism Research at Griffith University in Queensland, and Ann Mount, a Ph D student.

"Notable results - in a day's walk, you'll collect up to 1000 seeds in your socks and more in your shoes. The team collected 17,327 seeds from 67 species of plants clinging to 87 socks. 87? Yes - part of the experiment was to wear odd socks and sometimes only one sock, to compare kinds of sock material and also bare skin! Shoelaces, velcro and trouser seams also trap seeds. Roadside weeds are picked up at a particularly fast rate - 1300 in 5 minutes is possible! Long trousers, especially the modern microfibre fabrics, and Explorer socks, picked up fewer seeds than other clothing types in the experiment. There was no mention of sock protectors and gaiters, but presumably similar findings would apply there."

There was no mention of *Fox in Socks*, either, but presumably similar findings would also apply there.☼

Christmas Party

Date: Wednesday 10 December 2008
Time: 4.30- 7pm (Come and go anytime)
Location: Stromlo Depot (500 Cotter Road, Weston Creek)
Food and drinks provided

RSVP to Rachael on 6207 2145 or
Communityprograms@act.gov.au by Monday 8 December

What' around

Family: POACEAE - the Grass family

From left to right - seeds of:
**Nassella neesiana* - Chilean Needle Grass
Austrostipa bigeniculata - Spear Grass
Austrostipa scabra - Spear Grass

A tussock of **Nassella neesiana* - Chilean Needle Grass found on a nature strip in Duffy.
It is growing amongst native grasses
This *Weed of National Significance* has not been recorded on Cooleman Ridge ☼

Nassella neesiana or *Austrostipa sp*?

Nassella neesiana (previously Stipa neesiana) - Chilean Needle Grass is a Weed of National Significance. It is regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia because of its invasiveness, potential for spread, and economic and environmental impacts. It is closely related to another Weed of National Significance, serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*)

From the Molonglo Catchment Group
Weed Fact Sheet:

Plant: *a tall grass to 1m high, joints of the flowering stems are bent with fine short white hairs*

Leaves: *dark green flat to slightly in-rolled ribbed leaves to 5mm wide, tend to droop as they grow longer, while native spear grasses retain straight, more erect leaves*

Seeds: *sharply pointed and red or purplish when young, 6-10mm long, with a long (6-9cm) awn (tail) attached at the top end of the seed. Best distinguishing feature: membranous collar (corona) where awn attaches to the seed (this may need magnification to be visible). Awns twist when mature and may tangle together. This grass can also produce seed hidden within the bases of the flowering stems.* ☼

More

A profusion of green rosettes noted on the western side of the Ridge in July was found to be *Leptorhynchos squamatus* – Scaly Buttons. These had been recorded in 1995 a little further south, behind Mt Arawang.

Even more

At least 7 plants of *Dichopogon fimbriatus* (Nodding Chocolate Lily) have been flowering above the Kathner St dam this spring. They were last recorded there in November 1995, (incorrectly identified as *Arthropodium milleflorum* – Pale Vanilla Lily) though the site has been checked every year since. *Arthropodium milleflorum* was reported somewhere on the Ridge in December 1993 – it could well have been the same cluster.
Choughs are raising a second family in the nest near the Kathner St dam.
Tawny Frogmouths have been heard in Kathner Street

Anne I'Ons, November 22: *"The regular mowings on street pavements around Kambah near the Mt Taylor boundaries are reducing or totally eliminating the St John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum). I found information that regular mowing will control/eliminate St John's Wort and over the last 5 years, this [has shown to be] correct."* ☼

Weed alert December 2008

From Steve Welch:

"It has recently come to notice that over 300 plants of Mexican Feather Grass - *Nassella tenuissima* have been sold through Canberra Nursery Outlets. It was probably labelled as Stipa. If you have bought Stipa plants from any nursery outlets in the ACT or region within the last 12 months please check http://www.weeds.org.au/cgi-bin/weedident.cgi?tpl=plant.tpl&ibra=all&card=G13 or contact the ACT Weeds Officer, Mr. Steve Taylor, on 62072278. This species has the potential to be as bad as Serrated Tussock as an agricultural and environmental weed. It is not yet established in the ACT: do not let it seed". ☼