



# COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

## Newsletter June 2011

### Previous Sunday meeting 15<sup>th</sup> May

Eight intrepid men plus Arminel spent a sunny afternoon on the steep slopes of Group Area South. There's been a lot of blackberry regeneration, so George and Rob cut and dabbed to discourage them again. Gösta and Alan both found *Hypericum perforatum* St John's Wort to remove – yessir, yessir, 3 bags full! Rohan swung his big mattock and demolished more *Paspalum* and *Phalaris* clumps. Malcolm checked for pine wildings and eucalypt seedlings – he found both. And old dog Doug taught some new tricks to newcomer Paul. Meanwhile, Arminel climbed further up Mt Arawang botanising and found a *Sorbus sp* (Rowan) in glorious autumn leaf, with a great crop of fruit (see photo.) The cuppa, cookies and cake provided by stalwart Pat at the end of the session enabled us to chat and catch up on news and gossip.



Photo A. Ryan

Rohan and Rowan – which is the weed?

### Future Programme

#### Next Meeting – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June

**Time** – 1.30 – 4pm

**Location** – Nature trail start/end, Kathner Street

**Tasks** – Track maintenance, plant ID

**Meeting Place** – Kathner Street car park.

**Bring** – Hat, gloves, digger (or borrow one of ours)

**QUERIES** - Doug Tinney, 62888589

Please let me know of any changes to your address or other details.

### Temporary change in roles

While Arminel is away during June and July Doug will stand in on Presidential duties and Anna will stand in as editor. We hope Arminel has a wonderful and relaxing break!

### Pauline's work accepted at CSIRO

Gösta Lyngå

The Cooleman Ridge herbarium of four big folders with pressed plants, which Pauline painstakingly had collected, is now with the National Herbarium at CSIRO. Receiving the donation, Brendan Lepschi expressed his great admiration for the professional work with the labelling and organising of the specimens.

Interestingly, there are lots of tiny seedlings of red box *Eucalyptus polyanthemos* in the low-lying areas of Cooleman Ridge. Higher up there are much fewer seedlings, so maybe all that rain during the summer has made a difference.

## What's around

***Pteridium esculentum*** Danger: toxic rhizomes

**Common name:** Bracken Family Dennstaedtiaceae

(New Latin – named in honour of German botanist August Wilhelm Dennstaedt 1776–1826)

Gk Pteris = Wing; Lat esculentus = edible. (The same plant grows in New Zealand and was a staple Maori food.)

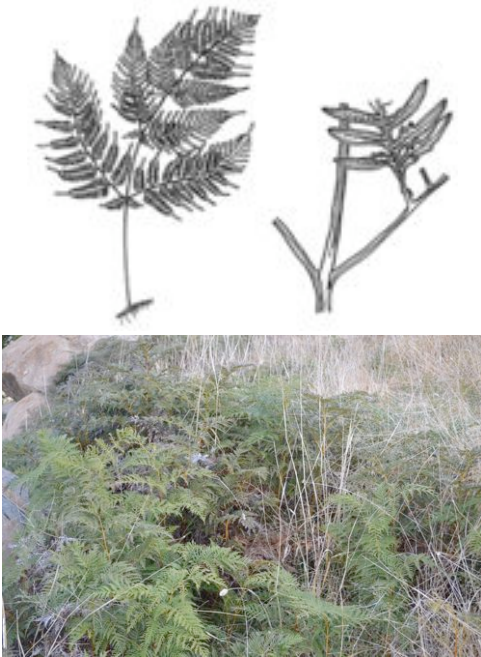


Photo taken by Pat Ryan

**Description:** Rhizome very long, creeping, 2–10 mm diam., densely covered with dark, red-brown simple hairs.

Fronds erect, stiff, mostly 0.6–1.5 m high; stipe brown; minor rachises with wing-like lobes between segments; lamina dark green above but paler below, older fronds glabrous above with fine hairs below, broad-triangular in outline, 3–4-pinnate; ultimate segments narrow, entire or with a few basal lobes.

Sori ± continuous beneath margins; indusium 2-lipped, outer lip green, inner lip pale brown.

**Distribution and occurrence:** in open forest, or on cleared land where it can form extensive colonies and be a troublesome weed that is difficult to eradicate. (The roots and rhizomes of this plant hold the soil, while spreading fronds create a shady environment that promotes growth of seedlings.)

**Traditional Indigenous Uses:** Rhizomes contain starch, but were baked or roasted first to destroy toxins (Cherikoff & Isaacs 1990). Rhizomes were harvested in late summer.

Young fronds were roasted in hot ashes and eaten.

Fresh bracken sap was used for stings of a bull ant or a stinging nettle

*Information from PlantNET and the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust of NSW websites. Illustration D.Mackay.*

## Poor old Mr Wombat

Doug Tinney

Over the last month or two, I've been contacted by a friend in Guinness Place, Chapman, about a wombat that kept nosing around his backyard during the day. It would appear, have a drink then disappear again.

This is one of the few times I've heard of a definite wombat sighting on the Ridge. Others tell me that they've seen some over the years, but this was unusually frequent. A couple of weeks ago the wombat was again in the back yard (which interfaces with the Ridge). This time it didn't look particularly well. Such was the concern for the beast that a ranger was called. Apparently the animal had an advanced case of mange, too advanced for survival hence it was euthanased. Very sad.

Thinking this must be a unique case, I googled 'Wombat+mange' and got 45,000 hits! Infection is usually via foxes. Another reason for maintaining a vertebrate pests officer.



Photo from Wombat Protection Society of Australia [www.wombatprotection.org.au](http://www.wombatprotection.org.au)

## Drain Update

The drain works on the Mt Arawang end of Cooleman Ridge are nearing completion and works are shifting to the Kathner St end. David Mackenzie of Lincoln Close informed us that the contractor has a 12 month period in which they are responsible for the rehabilitation of disturbed areas. There have been concerns with this rehabilitation as there has been an outbreak of Bathurst Burr since soil was brought into the reserve as 'clean fill' and about half the seed produced by Bathurst Burr has a dormancy of two or more years.

Construction of timber steps linking the pedestrian lanes from Lincoln Close to the new service track is almost complete; steel steps from Pelham Close are yet to come. Other pedestrian access ways remain unimpeded.