



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter April 2016

Previous Meeting – Sunday 20th March - Group Area South (Arawang)

Perfect weather greeted the four starters for our session. Two got into cutting and dabbing Sweetbriar *Rosa rubiginosa*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, and *Pyracantha* spp., mainly working near the old quarry. Lots of hips and haws removed! (With a third volunteer, they returned to the site for a follow-up on 24th March. Conditions were still ideal for poisoning big woody weeds.) At our usual patch, the persistent Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* is sneaking along through the grass, with lots of little plants. Very disheartening to the workers there! At this time of year, we usually change our starting time. So two staunch stalwarts arrived after lunch, missing the rest of us who had been there in the morning! One got to work clearing blackberries with his mattock, while the other undertook a tour of inspection.

Works & Projects

We're expecting several tracks and trails to be closed at times over the next few months, for various improvements to be made. There may also be some burning. Our Managers are keeping us informed.

Contractors at work

Spray operators have been targeting African Lovegrass *Eragrostis curvula* in the Reserve.

Achtung!!! New Volunteer Insurance

New administrative arrangements require all Parkcare volunteers to register as individuals with the Insurer. Help is available for this daunting task! Details in covering e-mail.

Next Meeting

Sunday 17th April 1.30 – 4 pm (Eastern
Standard Time)

Nature Trail/Pauline's Patch
Meet at Kathner St Entry!

NB: AFTERNOON SESSION!!

More about wildlife.

It is so sad for a family to lose their favourite pet to a snake on Cooleman Ridge, but it must be remembered that the snakes are the protected species while dogs are supposed to be protected by their owners.

It seems that there are two kinds of loose-dog-owners: those who cannot read and those who can read but not understand. For the latter ones we could ask for the signs to be more explicit, perhaps informing about the snakes. Another solution to the problem was hinted at by Rob last month: just breed dogs that will do the weeding. One may also teach those dogs to leave the wildlife alone.

If all that works: LET THEM LOOSE!

Gösta Lyngå

Conyza, aka Fleabane

The CRPCG thanks all those who pulled out these weeds over the past few weeks. Signs encouraging the activity were placed on gates and fences immediately after our last working bee, and now there are piles of pulled Fleabane dumped on paths, as requested. CRPCG greatly appreciates this assistance in reducing the weed-load on the Ridge.

What's around

Eragrostis brownii

Common name: Brown's Lovegrass



Family: Poaceae

Genus: *Eragrostis* (from Gk. Eros = Love + agrostis = a kind of grass)

Species: *brownii* (no doubt named after someone with the surname Brown!!)

Description: Perennial grass 10-60cm tall. Leaves with a hairless sheath at the base. Ligule a fringe of hairs or a membrane with a fringe of hairs. Leaves 10-25cm long, 1-3mm wide, flat or with edges rolled in, often rolled when dry, rough or hairless, with rough edges. Sometimes hairy at the junction of the blade and sheath. Spikelets green or grey, 4-13mm long. Seeds with no bristles. Mature seed groups spreading.

Scan (left) - Linda Spinaze

Description and photo of plant in G.M. Cunningham, WE Mulham, PL Milthorpe and J H Leigh (1981 and later printings) Plants of Western New South Wales page 98

Online References: PlantNET Flora online; FactSheet *Eragrostis brownii* keys.lucidcentral.org



I recently noticed a small grass, growing almost in a rosette, with its inflorescences spreading out in a flat circle. It looked like an Eragrostis, and I feared that it was African Lovegrass, since ALG seems to take many varied forms. So I was delighted when the ANBG identified it as a native lovegrass, Eragrostis brownii, or Brown's Lovegrass.

It can be distinguished from ALG because it doesn't have a blue hue to its leaves, the spikelets are smaller and the seeds are very close to the flower stem. It is common along eastern Australia from Cairns to Tas, in a wide variety of soils and habitats, flowering and fruiting in all months. The Coolman Ridge E. brownii specimen was found on a vehicle track, beside a gate along the BNT. When it rains this area is quite wet, but dries out in summer.

Linda



The Ryans report that native Paper Wasps are busy around the local area, as shown in Pat's photo. These beneficial social insects prey on spiders and on other insects - the 20 cent coin shows the relative size of the nest and its attendants.

Waterwatcher Pat also reports cattle have damaged the edges and fouled the water at the Old Dam. Turbidity of the water was 50 - in other words, muddy.