



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter May

2009

Previous Sunday meeting April 19th

The wind was blowing cold off the mountains and close to the ground was the best place to be. None the less, Group Area Central lifted our spirits as always. *Themeda triandra* spreads vigorously, and there is now very little *Salvia verbenaca* to be found where a few years ago we faced a daunting carpet. A small *Hardenbergia violacea* seedling has established far distant from its relatives down the hill. The western slope carries enough *Verbascum thapsus* for several more work parties, and the gully below the reservoir has woody weeds for the herbicide team when conditions are ripe. In this same gully, patches of *Melichrus urceolatus* are steadily advancing beside the dry watercourse.

We took a break in the shelter of some trees for a business meeting before resuming our tools. Arminel and Linda found a convenient colony of *Eragrostis curvula* out of the wind, and it kept them busy well after knock-off time. ☼

Future programme

With the cooler months here, we have reverted to afternoon Sunday work parties.

Next meeting, Sunday 17th May

- GAS/Arawang – weed removal and plant ID.
- meet on Namatjira Drive just before the Kambah Pool Road turn-off, or

GAS/Arawang

- 1.30-4 pm
 - bring hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, rain gear.
- ☼

Aprasia

On Friday 10th April Arminel happened upon an *Aprasia parapulchella* under a rock on the north-facing slope of Fence Post Hill. It vanished very smartly down one of its holes but a shed skin was lying there to convince any sceptics. This is the first we've seen since September 2007 (by the new section of the Nature Trail).

David Wong, a masters candidate who is studying *Aprasia*, was pleased to hear of the sighting and would appreciate notification of any other finds. He's also pleased to know that we are careful not to dislodge rocks whenever possible. ☼

Migrants

On Friday 17th April 4 twittering flocks of honeyeaters passed over Fence Post Hill

Tobias responded to our curiosity with the following note:

"In a nutshell, most of the migrating honeyeaters are Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, with some White-naped. These honeyeaters are known locally for their migration, and it occurs about this time (April) every year. The birds migrate somewhere east or north-east, but depending on the weather they might be seen going in any old direction. They breed up in the ranges, and migrate north in winter. I don't think their migration path is known very well.

"They do migrate in big numbers every year, but this year seems to be pretty good, especially around the house. Out at Tidbinbilla the day before yesterday, there were thousands of birds moving about.

"The migration isn't so obvious in spring."

David Sledge's decade of observations show that he recorded honeyeaters in their dozens and hundreds from April and into May, while in August, September and October the biggest group held 12.

This is a busy year for Tobias, but he still had time to win two prizes in the Australian National Botanic Gardens photo competition. Well done! ☼

Botanical Resource Centre at the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

You can learn to identify your own native plants using interactive computer keys, microscopes and the public reference herbarium. There is hands-on access to a library of nearly 5000 pressed and dried plant specimens collected from Canberra and the surrounding southeast region, from Sydney to the Victorian border and almost as far inland as Wagga.

Open daily 9.30am – 4.30pm. Facilitators are available to help you learn to use the facility on Wednesdays and Sundays 1 pm – 4pm.

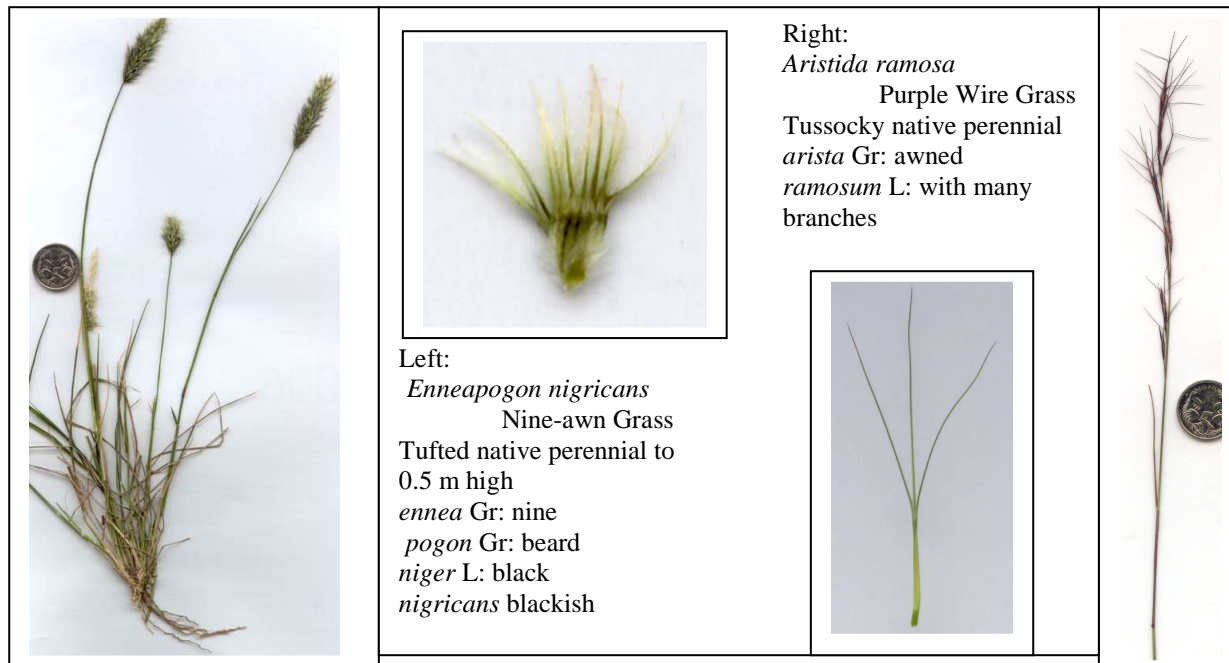
For information contact the Visitor Centre on 6250 9540. ☼

Best wishes

to Tina: get better fast! ☼

What's around

POACEAE – *poa* Gr. meadow grass. The Grass family. Previously Gramineae



Left:
Enneapogon nigricans
Nine-awn Grass
Tufted native perennial to
0.5 m high
ennea Gr: nine
pogon Gr: beard
niger L: black
nigricans blackish

Right:
Aristida ramosa
Purple Wire Grass
Tussocky native perennial
arista Gr: awned
ramosum L: with many
branches

Pinus radiata

Since the 2003 fires and up to November 2008, 53 *P. radiata* seedlings/saplings have been removed from the Ridge, with their positions being recorded.

Records begun in 1992 show that in 1994 11 were removed and that during the first quarter of 1995 2 more were removed. These positions were not recorded. ☼

European Wasps

A stream of flying wasps led us to a hole in the ground near the top of Fence Post Hill on Friday 10th April. A report was sent using the Canberra Connect form http://www.contact.act.gov.au/cgi-bin/canberraconnect.cfg/php/enduser/ask.php?p_prods=&p_cat_s=171%2C258 and acknowledged. All activity at the hole has since ceased. ☼

May challenge

This is RabbitScan month, when we are asked to submit our observations.

Key data needed:

- Rabbit numbers
- Rabbit locations
- Rabbit damage (i.e. vegetation)
- Rabbit warrens and burrows (numbers, locations, and whether active with live rabbits or abandoned)
- Other data you want to include, which will help determine the distribution and density of rabbits across Australia

Coolman Ridge Park Care Group has been registered to participate. Contact paulyn@iinet.net.au for more information or to contribute observations. ☼

ANBG Fungi Course

This course on *Learning about fungi* by Heino Lepp is again being offered at the ANBG. Fungi play a very important role in the environment, and most native plants have some form of symbiotic relationship with a fungus.

The course comprises 10 lectures, plus a microscopy session and a walk around the ANBG to see the fungi. Although the lecture series has already started you can drop in on the remaining sessions which end on Sunday 5th July. The lectures are given at 2:30 pm on the Thursday in the ANBG Theatre, and repeated on the following Sunday at 11:00 am.

Just turn up. A Gold Coin donation towards the work of the Friends of the ANBG would be appreciated.

Incidentally, the ANBG has some useful information on fungi at <http://www.anbg.gov.au/fungi/index.html> ☼

Mobile library

A new library list has been drawn up and will be attached to this newsletter. Erika has kindly agreed to house the books and can be contacted on 6288 3550, or erika.g@bigpond.com.

Our thanks to Bess, the original compiler of the library, and to subsequent serial custodians Alan, Janice, Doug and Arminel.

Several books were passed to various members for safe keeping: if you hold any please register the fact so that the list can be brought up to date. It's good to have the books with members who will use them but we need to have a record of their whereabouts. ☼