



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter October 2012

Previous Sunday meeting Cooleman Trig 16th September

Ten toilers made it to our annual onslaught on weeds at this trig point, the second highest place on our Ridge. This year, the hillside had been recently burnt as part of the fuel reduction programme. The burn, together with Graham's persistent work with weedicide over the summer, meant that there was little Spurge *Euphorbia depauperata* to be poisoned. By contrast, Wild Sage *Salvia verbeneca* and Salsify/Goatsbeard *Tragopogon spp* rosettes were emerging in great numbers. We collected lots of rubbish (mainly recyclable cans, drink containers, smashed glass) exposed by the burn. Clear evidence of the popularity of this lookout point!

Assisted by Tammy, Arminel collected some fernlets from the Mother Shield Fern *Polystichum proliferum*. She will try to strike them for eventual re-introduction to other locations on the Ridge.

This time also, Gösta marked out the proposed route for a new, gentle track from Monkman Street. He used stones from the large cairn to make small marker cairns along the way. For most of us, this was the first time we'd actually walked the alternative route, avoiding the eroded track.

We finished up with afternoon tea on the sheltered picnic rock, including Jenny P's delicious Blueberry Muffins, brought along from Titheradge Place by husband Graham.

Dr Osborne has had a long career as an ecologist both in Government and at the University of Canberra. One of his major professional interests is *Aprasia parapulchella*, the subject of his visit on this occasion.

Future programme

Sunday 21 October

1. Legless Lizard Lore

Dr Will Osborne (see box below) will join us on the Ridge prior to our AGM on Sunday 21 October. He will meet us at 1.30PM at the Kathner St entrance, and we are allowing an hour for a walk and talk with him.

2. Annual General Meeting

Time:- 2.30 – 3 pm

Place :- Kathner Street Entry. (If it rains, we'll adjourn to the Gill's garage next door!!)

Purpose: - to receive the reports of the previous year and conduct elections for all committee positions.

Nominations and Apologies to The Secretary, Cooleman Ridge Park Care Group Inc, at tamstardeluxe@hotmail.com

If you can't attend, but wish to nominate, nomination forms are available from the Secretary, Tammy Lee.

Note –

Members will receive a copy of the Annual Report with this newsletter.

3. Patrolling Pauline's Patch

Time:- approx 3 pm – 4 pm

Bring:- hat, gloves, hacker, drink, snack, raincoat if it is wet.

Task:- Plant ID and weed removal on Pauline's Rocky Knoll and Fencepost Hill. (This is a short distance from the Kathner Street meeting place.)

While working for Government he co-authored a number of papers on this lizard (they are on the web site) and has recently been working on Mt Taylor and the Pinnacle. He is currently supervising a PhD student working on the lizard.

What's around



A LARGE STEM GALL ON AN *ACACIA MELANOXYLON*

Plant galls are produced wholly by the plant, usually in response to substances injected by the adult of certain insects while laying eggs into the stem, or secreted by the young of those insects as they feed on the soft tissue or sap within the gall. (F.D.Hockings "Friends and Foes of Australian Gardens." A.H. & A.W.Reed Pty Ltd Sydney 1980) However, our mate Dr Philip Spradberry thinks this one could be caused by the rust fungus, *Uromycladium tepperanum*.

**Berberis aquifolium* - Common Name: Oregon Grape

Synonyms: *Mahonia aquifolium* (Pursh) Nutt. APNI*

(and our on-line plant list.)

Mahonia leschenaultii auct. non (Wight & Arn.) Takeda APNI*

Mahonia pinnata auct. non (Lag.) Fedde APNI* PlantNET

Evergreen shrub, often cultivated as an ornamental. Prickly glossy leaves, with racemes of yellow flowers followed by blue berries. Spread by birds. Suckers, forming dense thickets. Native of North America.

Family – *Berberidaceae*

From Barberry/Berberry – name of the type plant (Medieval Latin word of unknown origin)

aquifolium = having holly-like leaves. (Aquifoliales are an order of flowering plants, including most notably the Aquifoliaceae, or holly family.)



The Latest Word on Weeds

Steve Taylor, Senior Weed Management Officer with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, gave an interesting talk to the Canberra Bushwalking Club on Wednesday 15 August. Some of our CRPG members who are also bushwalkers were at the meeting. Steve gave an overview of environmental weed control in the Territory. He explained that much more of the budget is taken up controlling weeds in the grassy woodlands and peri-urban grasslands than in Namadgi National Park. As parkcarers and weeders ourselves, we can appreciate this point! Proximity to settlement, invasions from urban gardens, the constant traffic of horses, people, mowing contractors, wind-blown seeds - all these impact severely on our grasslands and nature reserves. Namadgi, on the other hand, benefits from its relative remoteness, thick forest canopy and (relatively) healthy understorey.

Steve was warm in his praise of parkcarers who he says are the Territory's 'unofficial rangers' and are indispensable both in the hands-on work they do and in their informative observations and feedback on the state of the reserves.

Steve showed us a large manual which contains the weed control plans for all the ACT nature reserves, and it is heartening to see that blackberry is to be targeted all along the ridge.

These days the Parks and Cons staff are severely understaffed, and Steve is now doing the work that he once shared with three others. He is a committed and passionate worker and environmentalist and is doing a demanding job under difficult conditions - worth remembering when we next have a complaint.

Jenny Horsfield

(This article was held over from Sept. Ed.)