



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

**Newsletter
May 2017**

***Previous meeting
Sunday 23 April
Lincoln Place***

The date for the working party in April coincided with Easter Sunday so was moved to a week later. It was a gloriously sunny Autumn afternoon, although rain-threatening clouds came over later. Nine regular weeders turned up to the slope above Lincoln Place, although due to an editor's error in the Newsletter, four (Pat, Arminel, Lena and Jenny) arrived via the trail from Darrell Place. Fortunately, they were not too cross and said they had used the extra walking to conduct a survey of the types and extent of the weeds along the trail and to take out some of them. These included briar roses, a catoniasia, an apple, a plum and the regrowth of some nettle trees. Malcolm also arrived from Darrell Place on his bike, and then promptly took out 200 verbascum rosettes. This was largely the weed of choice for the afternoon and was also heavily attacked by Rohan, Doug, Alan and Rob. So, another good turnout. Meanwhile, Linda and Graham had decided to do their weeding the Sunday before Easter but were rained off. Undeterred, they reconvened the following Tuesday and cleared most of the briar roses on the south-eastern aspect of Sentrybox Hill. Sadly they also discovered a large blackberry patch growing through the grass, close to the northern fence, near Graham's blackberry patch. It has been posted on the ArcGIS site in the hope that Richard will be able to deal with it on one of his regular spraying days.

Rob Lundie

***Next Meeting
Sunday 21 May
Mt Arawang***

Time: 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm

Meet: Horse paddocks on Namatjira Dr

Bring: hat, gloves, secateurs, doover-dabber, hacker, drink, raincoat if it is wet

Task: plant identification, weeding

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

Eric Rolls: 'A Million Wild Acres'

I thought of Eric Rolls' classic of Australian natural history 'A Million Wild Acres' as some of us on the last working party were talking about the effects of super phosphate on the soil and plant life. Writing about his beloved Pilliga Forest in Northern NSW, Rolls wrote: 'Heath plants eg *Banksia*, *Grevillia* and *Isopogon*, are adapted to soils of very low fertility. Many of them are tap rooted but a system of fine roots seeks the minute quantities of minerals in decaying leaves. No heath plant can tolerate disturbance of its roots. Indeed these sturdy looking plants lead a delicate existence. They are susceptible also to phosphorus. European mammals excreting large amounts are intolerable to them. Some mammals secrete phosphorus in their faeces, some in their urine. The bush daisies (*Helichrysum* spp., *Leucopogon* spp. and grass trees) are particularly susceptible. The manure of one steer can poison three square metres of these plants a day, a cat's one third of a metre. A discarded orange peel, a banana skin, is damaging. Two botanists, E.M.Heddle and

R.L. Specht, who experimented on heath in South Australia between 1950 and 1972, found that much of the phosphorus applied in 1950 was still being circulated among a changed vegetation in 1972.'

Jenny Horsfield



Grasshopper hitches a ride Photo by Lena Fleming

Pampas grass

Recently Pat and Arminel came across this weed (*Cortaderia selloana*) while walking along the Ridge. They wondered if it was a first sighting and whether other Park Care groups have come across it on their patches. A special article about it will appear in next month's Newsletter.

Rob Lundie



Tree regrowth on the Ridge above Lincoln Place 14 years after the 2003 fires Photo by Rob Lundie

Green Army Volunteers

On Tuesday 9 May a group of Aboriginal volunteers provided some much-needed assistance on the Ridge. They demolished a remnant blackberry patch which had become infested with fleabane and exotic solanum, removing most of the seed-heads and berries,

and cutting-and-dabbing the blackberry regrowth. Not a pleasant job with the old blackberry canes stabbing arms and legs, but at least more pleasant than their previous job of dispatching the carp from the drained Isabella Ponds! After lunch they dug out many of the verbascum scattered above Guinness Place. Thanks for a job well done.



Green Army at work Photos by Linda Spinaze



Green Army at work Photos by Linda Spinaze

Linda Spinaze

Newsletter distribution

Plastic folders containing 10 to 15 copies of the Newsletter have been placed at seven entrances to the Ridge: Kathner St, at the bottom of the steps up to Cooleman Trig, on the gate at the top of the Dam Fire Trail above Freebody Place, on gates at Darrell Place, and Guinness Place, on the little bridge above Lincoln Place, and at the entrance to Mt Arawang on Namatjira Drive. If you are reading this Newsletter from one of the plastic folders you are very welcome to contribute to the Newsletter, join the Group's activities, and even become a member. Further information is on the Group's [website](http://www.coolemanridge.org.au).

Rob Lundie