



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
December 2018

Previous meeting
Sunday 18 November
Lincoln Close

Doug, Rohan, Chris and Alan attended a sunny morning work party on the Ridge where they attacked *Phalaris*, *Verbascum*, *Salvia*, *Blackberry*, and *Briar Rose*. This was followed by the Cooleman Ridge AGM.
Alan Ford

AGM

The weeders stayed on for the AGM which Alan expedited efficiently. Fortunately, despite some absences, all the officers and committee members were re-elected unopposed. The team for 2019 is:
President: Linda Spinaze
Vice-President: Alan Ford
Treasurer: Rohan Thomas
Secretary: Rob Lundie
Committee: Brigitte Brickwood, Jenny Horsfield, Doug Tinney

End of year get together invitation

After we have finished weeding at 11.30, anyone who has volunteered for the Group this year is invited to Linda's house for an end-of-year get together and light lunch. RSVP to 0417276497 so that she has an idea of numbers.

Jenny Horsfield: Why I joined the park care group

We were one of the lucky households in Kambah in January 2003. We lost a car and some fencing to the fires but our (timber!) house remained intact due to the continued efforts of my husband, Rob and my brother

Next Meeting
Sunday 16 December
Mt Arawang

Time: 8.30 am – 11.00 am

Meet: Horse paddocks on Namatjira Drive

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

Task: plant identification, weeding

Contact: Linda Spinaze 6288 6916

Jan meeting: Sun 20 Jan, Kathner St

and because of a sudden change of wind as the fire swept down on us. The following Saturday we walked along the Murrumbidgee corridor and saw in disbelief the havoc wrought by the fires, with dead animals trapped against the fences and a pall of smoke over a dead and smouldering landscape. I thought the land would never recover. When I received an invitation to join Pauline and Gosta Lynga on a visit to Cooleman Ridge in March, I went along out of interest, not knowing what I would see. Their own special patch (Fencepost Hill) was marked by some huge blackened trees and a tangled understory of black sticks, though already epicormic growth was appearing everywhere. Then, just to the west of the hill, we saw a large patch of clustered everlastings in strong and vivid flower. As I recall, there were also some bluebells in flower there. That sent a strong message to me that recovery of this lovely hillside was possible. I joined Gosta and Pauline and their helpers on regular Friday morning work parties after that and have been

involved with the Friday group ever since. There have been many disappointments and setbacks during that time, especially the years immediately after the fires when we seemed to be waging a losing battle against weeds and erosion. Now, we feel that this patch of hillside is looking very healthy and recovering many of the features of a grassy woodland landscape. Still lots of work to be done though – I guess that's why we keep coming back! Some special moments: watching the white winged choughs go about their noisy social life near the dam, and seeing them return each year to build a nest and raise their young; seeing the recovery of beautiful native grasses and forbs in areas once swamped by tough pasture grasses; enjoying the peace of the hillside at all times of year, and thinking how lucky we are to be custodians of the area.

Jenny Horsfield

Dabber-doovers retain their potency

Recently, when the weather began to warm up and plants started to grow, I picked up one of my dabber-doovers which I had filled with 50% glyphosate/50% water before winter. During my spring morning walk, I merrily dabbed the verbascum rosettes with this old mixture. On getting home, I thought that perhaps the mixture was too old and ineffective, so I dabbed a couple of weeds near my front-door, leaving one weed untouched as a control. Two weeks later I was delighted to see the dabbed plants beginning to wilt and look very sad, and at 4 weeks they were decidedly dead. Meanwhile the control plant was healthy and green. So, contrary to the beliefs of some, the water/glyphosate mixture in our dabbers can maintain its effectiveness for months, rather than days. This may be dependent on many factors, and further experiments should be under-taken!

Linda Spinaze

The Kurrajong tree

Brachychiton populneus, commonly known as the Kurrajong, is a medium-sized tree with very variable, very green leaves. Some are simple and pointed, and others 3-9 lobed. There are many trees and saplings growing on Coleman Ridge, and there was an article about these lovely trees in last month's newsletter. They are in flower now, as you can see from the photo. The extended trunk is

a water-storage device. The tree had multiple uses by the aborigines, including roasting the seeds for food, water from the roots, and wood for making shields. More recently the leaves have been used for emergency fodder for drought-affected animals.



Kurrajong

Photo by Linda Spinaze

Acacia conundrum

I have been puzzling over specific acacias on Coleman Ridge for a couple of years. I could not tell the difference between *A. longifolia*, *A. floribunda* and *A. doratoxylon*. All these species are on our plant list, but when I examined samples, I could not tell the difference. So, I took three samples of acacias from different spots on the ridge to Dave Albrecht at the ANBG. According to him, they are all *A. floribunda*. This acacia has been classified as "exotic australian" by Sarah Sharp, and may become a weed pest. In the meantime, it provides shelter for native woodland birds on our ridge.



Acacia floribunda
Linda Spinaze

Photo by Linda Spinaze