



COOLEMAN RIDGE PARK CARE GROUP

Newsletter
December 2025

Previous Meeting

Sunday 16 November 2025

Darrell Place

A warm morning with occasional cool gusts when eight volunteers Hamish McGlynn, Natasha Newman, Chris Oates, Ian Priddle, Paul Sheils, Leanne Shepherd, Linda Spinaze and Rohan Thomas met at Darrell Place. Our target was the infestations of St John's Wort on both sides of the Centennial Trail that runs east across the Ridge from the large reservoir. We aimed to help halt the spread of the weeds by lopping off the flower heads before they could seed. Hamish, Paul and Rohan used power tools (whipper snipper, brush cutter, hedge trimmer) to attack the thick growth on the north side of the Trail. A PCS controlled burn is planned for a similarly large infestation on the south side. Linda, Ian, Natasha, Leanne and Chris focused on isolated clumps and individual weeds to the west of that area, using hand clippers and diggers. A key challenge for the team was to avoid damage to the native *Xerochrysum*, whose yellow flowers and foliage are similar to, and grow alongside, the wort. Linda also found a crop of tiny native Bulbine lilies (*Bulbine bulbosa*) thriving in the area and made a note of the other flowers that we hand-weeders saw: acaena, wahlenbergia, convolvulus, geraniums, and at least three native grasses. The surprise of the morning was Ranger Tenzin turning up with an

Next Meeting

Sunday 21 December 2025

Darrell Place

Time: 8.30 am – 11.00 am.

Weeding, then Christmas morning tea.

Meet: Darrell Place

Bring: hat, gloves, digger, water to drink.

Contact: Linda Spinaze 0417276497

ingenious and very welcome morning tea kit, encompassing teas, coffee, milk, hot water and a variety of biscuits. He said he was concerned that Linda was working us too hard!! While the rest of us knocked off at 11, the power tools men decided to keep going until their batteries were flat.



Linda Ian Paul Tash, Rohan
Chris Oates

Wallaby Grass

Many people know about Kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) but not its smaller cousins, Wallaby grasses. Currently beside tracks on the Ridge, are at least three varieties of wallaby grasses in "flower" - as much "flower" as a grass does. The photo shows three of these species. The "chubby" one is *Rydidosperma carphoides*, or Short Wallaby Grass. The other two need inspection under a microscope to ensure their exact species, but they are certainly wallaby grasses.



Wallaby grasses Photo: Linda Spinaze

Linda Spinaze

African Love Grass (ALG) Field Day

In early November I attended the ALG Field Day organised by ACT Biosecurity and Rural Services Units. Recent developments in the management of ALG were presented. Luke O'Loughlin (ACT Office of Nature Conservation) gave an overview of the data being collected, and its use in developing a weed management tool in collaboration with the CSIRO. Hanwen Wu (NSW DPI) gave a summary of work on herbicide treatments with or without supplementary non-herbicidal treatments. Bruce Davison (coastal NSW farmer) highlighted a very different philosophy based on the relationships between soil nutrient status and species responses that can contribute to weed and pasture management. Alison Elvin (ecologist, educator, farmer) provided an optimistic view of the potential for the management of ALG.

My take home messages were: ALG is here to stay, eradication is no longer an option; There is potential to manage ALG; Successful strategies are many faceted; Soil health has a strong role in influencing plant growth and species composition; Changing soil health can result in changing the competitive advantages of desirable species relative to weeds and contribute to weed suppression; Experiment, experiment, experiment; Make a plan and be prepared to amend it in the light of experience and keep records so that you can revisit the past based on what you see today; Be patient, as weed control is a long (decade or more) process. The final session was an open forum. My strongest impression of the contributions was the frustration of local land care/park care volunteers with the ACT Government around the inflexibility in planning open space mowing and the lack of supervision of many of the land management activities undertaken by contractors. I thought the field day well worth the effort and was impressed by the willingness of ACT Agencies' staff to engage with participants.

Nick Nicholls

New Fence

The CRPCG was dismayed at a fence erected in November between the Old Dam and the gate above Freebody Place. No mention was made of it in the October meeting between Parks rangers and the CRPCG, although we had been informed of a proposed fence/gate on the back road (Bicentennial Trail) to contain stock. After many emails, it turns out the fence was erected for a number of reasons: 1. To mark where the underground water pipe had recently been laid, to avoid damage to it from contractors who occasionally grade the track. 2. Cattle may be used to reduce the fire-load in the adjacent grassy areas, and therefore a fence would be needed. 3. If access is granted for horse-riders, the fence would restrict their access to that part of the Ridge. However, since the fence does not accurately mark where the pipe lies, and the other two possibilities have yet to be decided, it seems that the fence was erected rather hastily and with little planning. More fences will probably be needed if either of the latter two options are implemented.

Linda Spinaze