

ROYALLA
LANDCARE INC.
ABN 53 262 641 780

Royalla Landcare

Winter 2013

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WILDCARE
6299 1966

Landcare update

It has been a little while since our last newsletter—and on that note, if anyone in the area is interested in becoming an active committee member of the landcare group, please contact us; new members always welcome and help increase the outcomes of the group.

The regular activities of the group have continued over the past year. Our committee members continue to collect valuable data through Frogwatch and Waterwatch activities. With the help of the local rural fire service, committee members and volunteers assisted with making our environment a little more pleasant earlier this year on Clean Up Australia Day, with more than 20 bags of rubbish collected on the day. Interesting to note that over 50% of the rubbish was recyclable materials.

The draft management plan for the Royalla Swainsona Reserve was submitted to Council, and you will all have noticed the sign at the reserve—on the right hand side just over the railway bridge at the Monaro Highway entrance to Royalla Country Estate. Brochures with species listing are available at the Noticeboard. We will be continuing our work this year to build up the number of drooping she-oaks in the area, the main food source for the vulnerable Glossy Black Cockatoo. Some of the committee members were fortunate enough to meet 'Fifty' (pictured below), a young male Glossy Black Cockatoo, at the launch of K2C's Glossy Black Cockatoo Project. The launch was in

March this year, and was attended by the Hon. John Barilaro NSW Member for Monaro, who officially launched the project, and Mr Tim Overall, Mayor of Queanbeyan City Council, as well as many other interested parties. 'Fifty' was brought in by Daniel Gowland from the

Priam Psitticulture Centre located at Bungendore (www.priam.com.au). Named 'Fifty' after he was given a fifty/fifty chance of survival, he entertained us all—eating, scratching and squawking.



Glossy Black Cockatoo

habitat (drooping she-oaks)

As reported in our last newsletter, the Kosciusko to Coast (K2C) group have funding to protect the main source of food for the threatened species. Glossy black cockatoos in the region. The Royalla Landcare Group will have 1,000 of the trees to plant, and will be employing a green team to do some plantings on common areas through winter. Trees grow best on the ridges, or high up on sloping fields.



With the help of a group of volunteers from Greening Australia, RLG arranged for around 300 trees to be planted last week along the ridgeline above Trail PI Royalla.

If you would like FREE *Allocasuarina verticillata* (drooping she-oaks) CONTACT US: Royallandcare @earthbasics.com.au or 6280 4128 (w).

The only thing you have to do is plant the trees, and watch them grow!

Also, any sightings of the glossy black cockatoo should be reported to:

K2C Facilitator, Lauren Van Dyke on Ph: 0411 402 978 or email: facilitator@k2c.org.au
Photos: John Lemmon



LOVE CASSINIAS

Cassinia longifolia or Cauliflower Bush

Some of you may have seen the ABC's Gardening Australia TV show that was devoted to the ACT in recognition its 100th Year Birthday Celebrations. One plant mentioned when Costa interviewed Adrian Brown of the ACT Parks & Wildlife Service was the *Cassinia Longifolia* that, among other things, was said to burn slowly.

The *Cassinia* genus comprises about 30 species, most in Australia with some in South Africa and New Zealand. About four of these species grow in the ACT and surrounding areas. The *Cassinia longifolia* is a large shrub that grows to about 3m although it is not a particularly tidy plant. It flowers in Summer with large heads of cream to off-white flowers that give it its common name of 'Cauliflower Bush'; and sometimes called 'Dogwood'. The flowers can be used in flower arrangements. The leaves are green, long and narrow. It is a very hardy, frost tolerant plant well adapted to this area and is a common understorey plant.

Adrian Brown explained that Aboriginals collected the mature seeds that were ground into a flour to make damper. It is also used in their smoking ceremonies.

So if you are looking for an understorey plant that is slow to burn, you might consider planting some *Cassinia longifolia*.

Further reading:
Australian Native Plants by John W Wrigley and Murray Fagg

"...a very hardy, frost tolerant plant well adapted to this area ..."

"...if you are looking for an understorey plant that is slow to burn..."



Cassinia Longifolia
Photo: Mallory Owen

Bio-Control Weed Field Day

And Call for

Expressions of Interest for release of bio-agents on your property

—limited to 20 properties

- Do you have an area of persistent weed problems?
- Do you want to find another method of tackling weeds on your property?

With the assistance of small grants funding from the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority through the NSW Government, Royalla Landcare Group will be hosting a Bio-control Weed Field Afternoon on **24 August 2013**.

The field day (a half-day workshop) will be on biological control agents that are currently available for release to help tackle common weeds threatening box gum woodlands in the region. After attending the workshop, 20 interested landholders that have registered their interest prior to the workshop, will then be able to have some agents to release on their properties.

The event will increase the awareness and understanding of landholders in peri-urban environments of biological control agents that area available to assist control weeds. The event will add another tool that landholders can use as part of their integrated weed management plans, and there will be monitoring and follow up to assess the success of weed control.

The workshop to be run by Barry Sampson on Saturday 24 August 2013, 12 noon to 4pm and will involve a presentation, followed by afternoon tea and discussion, with on-site release of agents at the Royalla Swainsona Reserve (the 'nursery site').

*Bring along your enthusiasm
and attention*

Bio-control Weed Field Afternoon

WHEN: Saturday 24 August 2013
12 noon to 4pm

WHERE: Jerrabomberra Creek Rural Fire Shed, 1722 Old Cooma Road, Royalla (2km from Monaro Hwy towards Queanbeyan)

WHY: Targeting St Johns Wort, Paterson's Curse & Viper's Bugloss weeds....possibly thistles in spring as well.

COST: \$10 donation per property for printing and food costs

RSVP: Email
royallalandcare@earthbasics.com.au
by 21/8 to assist in catering

*What weed will you
target?*

The register is open for interested participants in the agent release . To register your interest, and to participate in the workshop, contact: Royallalandcare@earthbasics.com.au or ph Maryke at 6280 4128 (w)

Landholders who express interest will take home bio-agents following the session, for release on their own weed species.

Remember to nominate your weed species of concern when you express interest.

Weed feature: Paterson's Curse & Viper's Bugloss

(*Echium plantagineum* & *Echium vulgare*)

Why are Paterson's curse & viper's bugloss weeds?

- Invade pasture, river beds, roadsides and other waste ground
- Invade grasslands and grassy woodlands
- Adapt well to poor, shallow soils and reduced soil fertility
- Seed prolifically
- Are usually avoided by stock, hence they often become dominant in grazed pasture and reduce carrying capacity
- Leaves are toxic to stock (Paterson's curse is especially toxic to horses. Toxicity increases during flowering and seeding)
- Hairs cause irritation in livestock and humans

Description

Paterson's curse:

Plant: annual, occasionally biennial, herb, flat rosette grows multiple flowering stems to 1m high, on poor soils may be single stemmed, hairy stems and a hardy taproot

Leaves: the leaves of the rosette are oval or lanceolate (far longer than they are wide and tapering towards the tip), hairy and have branched veins, leaves on stems become smaller towards flowerheads

Seeds: wrinkled, brownish

Flowers: from late winter to early summer (can flower throughout year), large, tubular, blue-purple, to 3cm long with two of the five stamens, (antenna like protrusions) extending from the flower

Viper's bugloss:

Plant: biennial or perennial herb, flat rosette grows single flowering stem to 1m high, occasionally adopts branching habit, covered with coarse prickly hairs, hardy taproot

*Weed: Paterson's Curse rosette.
Photo: Jackie Miles/ Max Campbell*

Leaves: rosette leaves much narrower than in Paterson's curse, hairy, longitudinal veins are unbranched

Seeds: multiple, tiny, pepper like seeds from each flower

Flowers: large, tubular, blue-purple with four of the five stamens protruding



Weed: Paterson's Curse. Photo: Phil Hansen



Weed: Paterson's Curse. Photo: Jackie Miles/Max Campbell



Fact sheets are available from the Molonglo Catchment Group website. Visit www.molonglocatchment.com.au or call 62992119 for more information about getting involved in your living environment.

Information used to compile this fact sheet was kindly provided by the Southern Tablelands and South Coast Noxious Plants Committee: www.southeastweeds.org.au

Dispersal via

- Was initially spread via seed in contaminated hay
- Further spread via livestock (seeds stick to coat and/or carried internally) and humans (i.e. in mud on vehicles)
- In water
- spread on vehicles used for slashing the plant on roadsides

Status

Both Paterson’s curse and viper’s bugloss are listed as class 4 noxious weeds in all council areas within the Molonglo Catchment. The growth and spread of the plants must be controlled in accordance with local management plans published by each local council.

In the ACT, Paterson’s curse and viper’s bugloss are class 3 pest plants which must be contained.



Weed: Viper’s Bugloss
 Note the 4 protruding stamen.
 Photos:
 Jackie Miles/Max Campbell

As featured in the Molonglo Catchment Weed Information Pack—a resource to enable accurate identification and effective control of high priority weeds in the Molonglo Catchment. Available in hard copy from Royalla Landcare Group

FREE weed kits are available in hard copy from Royalla Landcare, ph 6280 4128 or Email: Royallalandcare@earthbasics.com.au

or in soft copy from www.molonglocatchment.com.au

Look-alikes

Native plants can often be confused with weed species. The following information aims to assist you with accurate identification to prevent the loss of our declining natives. If you are unsure what species you are dealing with, take advantage of the identification services on offer from your local weeds officer (either at your local council or the ACT’s Parks, Conservation and Lands) before carrying out any controls.

Variable plantain (*Plantago varia*) has similar rosettes however flowers are dissimilar. Note the tooth on the edge of the leaves.



Native: variable plantain

FREE weed kits are available in hard copy from Royalla Landcare, ph 6280 4128 or Email: Royallalandcare@earthbasics.com.au

or in soft copy from www.molonglocatchment.com.au

FOX TRAPS

Worried about feral animals (foxes, rabbits, cats)? You can pick up a Feral animal kit now, produced by the Molonglo Catchment Group. Or **hire a fox trap** (\$30). Contact Royalla Landcare More info? Phone: 6280 4128 or E-mail: royallalandcare@earthbasics.com.au

Paterson's Curse & Viper's Bugloss cont...

Control methods

Molonglo Catchment Weed Control Calendar. Maintain groundcover to prevent dense infestations occurring and avoid buying feed from areas known to be affected by these weeds. On high production pastures, cultivate and establish a dense sward of grasses and clovers that will out-compete the weeds. Over-grazing will encourage the spread of this unpalatable weed by reducing pasture vigour.

Hand dig small infestations or spray. Seek advice on chemical application from your Council Weeds Officer or local 'bush friendly' nursery. Always use chemicals as directed on the label.

Slashing the weeds can be highly effective in reducing the vigour of the plants however timing is critical. Due to the persistent nature of this weed it is advised that you contact your local weeds officer for detailed control advice.

A number of biological controls have been released in NSW. Most are available and easy to rear and have been recorded to have a good impact on Paterson's curse. Contact the Molonglo Catchment Coordinator for information on how to access these biological controls.

Weed article as featured in and printed with permission from the Molonglo Catchment Weed Information Pack—a resource to enable accurate identification and effective control of high priority weeds in the Molonglo Catchment. Available in hard copy from Royalla Landcare Group, or on the web at www.molonglocatchment.com.au

Royalla Landcare has 1,000 She-oaks ready to plant now. Contact Royalla Landcare if you are interested in planting some on your ridge-tops.

Indian Myna Birds

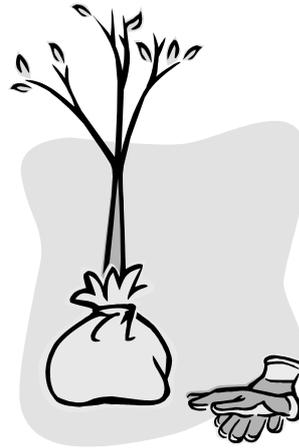
If you are seeing more Indian Myna Birds in the area you might like to look at the following website and download a help sheet on trapping Indian Myna Birds.

<http://www.indianmynaaction.org.au/>

Traps available from Royalla Landcare

royallalandcare@earthbasics.com.au

Cheap Trees for members:



Royalla Landcare offers **native tubestock** from Greening Australia at cost price, with free **tree guards**. Available to all members.

Minimum 1 tray of 20 at \$30-\$40 per tray. Species list available.

If you are interested in receiving some native plants in Winter or Spring please contact Royalla Landcare to

discuss your needs and choose species.

We can help you select the most appropriate native plants for your property or to fit into your property plans. We can arrange a site visit if desired.

Ring or email to secure your order.

Contact: Royallalandcare@earthbasics.com.au or ph Maryke at 6280 4128 (w)

Jerrabomberra Creek Water Testing

Jerra Ck Test date	Water temp	Ph	Elec Cond	Turbidity
13/06/13	6	7.8	370	0
18/05/13	5	6/6	440	<10
20/04/13	8	7.8	450	<10
21/03/13	14	7.4	450	<10
16/02/13	17	7.7	450	<10
19/01/13	20	7.7	740	<10
15/12/12	17	7.5	410	0
18/11/12	16	7.5	380	<10
19/10/12	13	7.2	210	10

Some of the results: What do they mean?

Electrical Conductivity (EC): EC is a measure of the ability of water to pass an electrical current. Streams tend to have constant range, and it is useful as a measure of water quality to establish a baseline. Significant changes could therefore indicate pollution has entered a stream. The ground water and soil determine the EC. Limey soils are naturally more conductive, more dissolved CO₂; waterlogging also increases mineral content. Quite a few of the waterways in the catchment are now running in the 700s or 800s, but in general the levels have come down.

Turbidity is how much light can penetrate the water. Silt and dissolved humus change turbidity, and rain can stir up the water.

Generally in our testing area, EC and turbidity are at good levels. More info:

<http://www.molonglocatchment.com.au/mchip.htm>

Stephen Skinner recently wrote an interesting article about Guise Creek—a creek you will all be familiar with as you drive over it along the highway. The article is reproduced with permission

Guise Creek *Stephen Skinner*

STREAMLINES

Guise Creek runs from just above the Monaro Highway when you come up out of Theodore, ambles across the shallow valley towards Williamsdale from Royalla, and meets the Murrumbidgee at Lobb's Hole.

The chains of ponds above the highway are in open grassy box-gum woodland. On the other side of the road, where the solar farm is planned to be built, the creek has been incised by sheet erosion. This has been stabilised following some intervention by Southern ACT Catchment Group and the local landholders in 2007. From there the creek travels south across pasture in former grassy box-gum woodland until it reaches the Gigerline Gorge escarpment west of Williamsdale. The creek then plunges into the gorge through scribbly gum-stringbark woodland and meets the river on a small floodplain dominated by one of the loveliest stands of manna gums in the region.

In dry spells the creek trickles from pool to incised pool, and the plunge into the river is still. When the rains come, the wide valley quickly holds a raging torrent, but that is soon gone – another 'flood & dry' creek.

In September 2012, the ACT government approved the development of *FRV Royalla Solar Farm Pty Ltd*. The concept of a solar farm in the gentle, exposed south-east facing slope at the top of the Guise Creek valley is to be commended. Solar farms make renewable energy with little if any greenhouse gas release once construction has been completed. With fewer than six rain days in any month in the area, the energy production should be more or less continuous. The disruption to the grass cover in the construction phase should be quickly repaired. Only a small part of the south-east corner of the block interacts with the creek line. With forethought and sensible planning the creek-line that may need to be covered should



Guise Creek, just below the proposed solar farm, in 2007 before it was repaired.

be enhanced by the site levelling. The up-stream creek, across the highway, is in good condition. The stream further down the valley is incised, has a history of erosion and deserves to be remediated as part of the development. It is up to the locals in the creek valley, and in nearby Royalla to make their expectations clear during the planning period.

If you would like to be the Waterwatcher for Guise (Guise's seems redundant, or am I being very Crow-Eaterish) Creek contact Martin Lind at the Southern ACT Catchment Group, 6296 6400 or waterwatch@sactcg.org.au

Call for volunteers— many hands make light work

The landcare group is always seeking new members, and additional committee members to help plan future projects. Please join us. We encourage you to be involved—everyone is busy, but just a few hours every now and then helps get things off the ground—and we're a very friendly bunch! Contact for further information: [Royallalandcare @earthbasics.com.au](mailto:Royallalandcare@earthbasics.com.au) or phone 6280 4128 (w).

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E-mail: royallalandcare@earthbasics.com.au

Royalla Landcare is an active group in the improvement and protection of the natural environment of the Royalla Area. The Royalla Area contains grassy box woodland and grassland communities, which are classed as Regionally Endangered in the Murrumbidgee / Molonglo Catchments.

Our projects aim to address the following issues:

- Enhancing local indigenous fauna and flora and avoiding loss of biodiversity.
- Preserving and enhancing remnant grassy woodland.
- Establishing linking wildlife corridors
- Raising community awareness and education about sustainable land management e.g. responsible grazing techniques, erosion and weed control, caring for native ecosystems.

Membership

Membership entitles you to Royalla Landcare Group newsletters, guest speakers & events, Landcare support and Cheap Trees, and more importantly, it's your contribution to landcare activities in the region. Membership renewal was due at the AGM in Nov for the 2013 year. Cost is only **\$25 per property**.

ROYALLA LANDCARE INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM for 2013

Name: _____

Property Address: _____

Postal Address: As above or _____

Phone: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Annual Membership: \$ 25.00

Donation: \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Date: / /

(Cheques payable to: Royalla Landcare Inc.)

ABN: 53 262 641 780

RETURN TO:
Royalla Landcare
PO Box 1573
Fyshwick
ACT 2609

or by E.F.T.
BSB: 032-729
ACCOUNT: 244866
Please include your name and
E-mail a remittance to: royallalandcare@earthbasics.com.au

