



FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER NEWS

August 2012

IS THERE A WOMBAT ON MOUNT PAINTER? We recently found some very large holes at the top of the gully running west from the water tanks. Do they belong to a wombat?

AUGUST'S WORK PARTY

MAPPING RABBIT BURROWS AND CHECKING ON LAST YEAR'S PLANTINGS

When: 9.30am – 1pm, Sunday, 12 August

Where: Meet just inside the entrance to the reserve between houses nos 20 and 22 at the Booth Crescent, Cook.

The tasks: There are two tasks.

1. Recording the location of rabbit burrows with a GPS. No experience is needed. We will show you what to do and pair you with an experienced person. The information collected will help with the rabbit control work planned by the rangers for September-October.
2. Checking on the plants in the pink guards. Branches from some of these plants, which were planted last year by the Parks and Conservation Service, are positioned awkwardly in their guards and need releasing.



Wear: Hat, warm clothes, and sturdy footwear

Bring: Water and snack (for yourself) and a mug for hot soup at the end of the morning. All equipment you need will be provided.

For more information contact Sarah Hnatiuk on 0424 263 565 or at

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SEPTEMBER'S WORK PARTY will be held from 9am to 12.30pm on Sunday, 9 September. We will be working along the Summit Path, planting plant grass seed and looking after what we planted last year and in April this year.

DATES FOR WORK PARTIES UNTIL THE END OF 2012

Sunday, 14 October: weeding on the northern slopes behind the houses.

Sunday, 11 November: task to be decided closer to the date in light of emerging needs.

Sunday, 9 December: end of year work party, including a celebration of all the work done during the year.

TRAINING IN THE USE OF HERBICIDES

Are you interested in gaining Chemcert accreditation and being able to undertake a greater range of weed control activities on Mount Painter?

The Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) allows accredited people:

- To mix weed control chemicals;
- To use sprayers (as opposed to dabbers) to deliver Brushoff and broad leaved herbicides for weeds such as St John's Wort and Patterson's curse; and
- To supervise Parkcare weed control activities using herbicides.

At present there are four accredited Friends of Mount Painter. It would certainly be helpful to have more people able to join the current spraying Friends.

A course is being held at the end of August: Tuesday and Wednesday, 28-29 August for first-time trainees, and Tuesday only for people wishing to re-accredit. PCS will meet the cost of the training. Please let me know if you are interested.

LANDCARE WEEK, 3-9 SEPTEMBER

Landcare activities in the bush and on the coast link different sections of the population (community groups, schools, farmers, researchers, business, government and industry) in their efforts to protect and restore the environment and use it sustainably. Landcare Week celebrates these people and their projects. Many events are scheduled for Landcare Week, including a national conference that is being held in Sydney from 3-5 September.

Among the conference activities is an awards evening when the winners in 12 categories will be chosen from 88 finalists from the eight Australian states and territories. The finalists will be recognised for their work utilising and promoting sustainable agriculture, caring for their local environments, and educating others about the importance of local action and how it can make a real difference.

Have a look at the great range of activities that these finalists are involved with: . You can also vote online (before Tuesday, 4 September) for your 'favourite environmental hero' in the People's Choice Award: www.landcareonline.com.au/nationalawards.

Support the ACT's finalists!

SOME FACTS YOU MIGHT FIND INTERESTING

BIRDS IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF REVEGETATION

A team of researchers led by ANU's Professor David Lindenmayer has recently reported on the presence of birds in different types of revegetation in the agricultural areas of south-eastern Australia. The team followed 193 sites over 10 years, among which there were four different revegetation types: old growth, plantings, seedling regrowth and re-sprouting regrowth.

They found:

- Marked differences in the bird assemblages in the different types of revegetation;
- Differences in the number of species detected significantly more often in the different growth types; 29 species for plantings, 25 for seedling regrowth, 20 for resprout regrowth, and 15 for old growth;
- Many bird species of conservation concern were significantly more often recorded in resprout regrowth, seedling regrowth or plantings, but no species of conservation concern were recorded most often in old growth.

They concluded that differences in bird occurrence among different growth types are likely to be strongly associated with differences in the vegetation's structural complexity. **A range of vegetation growth types are likely to be required in a given farmland area to support the diverse array of bird species that have the potential to occur in Australian temperate woodland ecosystems.**

In the Mount Painter precinct, there is a mixture of plantings, a little old growth and some seedling revegetation, which provide habitats that are increasing in complexity as the years go by. Carmen Zanetti has already recorded 80 species in this area. Maybe we can expect to see an even greater range of bird species into the future.

(Taken from: Lindenmayer DB, AR Northrop-Mackie, R Montague-Drake, M Crane, D Michael, S Okada & P Gibbons (2012). Not All Kinds of Revegetation Are Created Equal: Revegetation Type Influences Bird Assemblages in Threatened Australian Woodland Ecosystems. PLoS ONE 7: doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0034527, downloadable for free from <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0034527>).

EASTERN GREY KANGAROOS

In high density populations that are in balance with their food supply, about 71% of the kangaroos are females. By late September, about 83% of the adults have large pouch young. They have young at foot until the young are about 10.5 months old. Most of these die as sub-adults at around 20 months old.

The ACT Government is helping to fund trials of an oral contraceptive for kangaroos which it is hoped will reduce the need for culls. The challenge, though, is to find an attractive bait in which to deliver the contraceptive to the animals when there is an ample food supply.

(Information from a poster with no authors listed; Don Fletcher from ACT Conservation, Planning and Research is given as a contact.)

SURVIVAL OF PLANTINGS ON MOUNT PAINTER, 2005-2011

Since 2006, I (Sarah Hnatiuk) have been following the survival of Friends of Mount Painter's plantings on the reserve. In February this year, I analysed the data available collected so far and prepared a short paper on the results. Here is the summary from this paper.

Summary and key findings.

Tubestock planted on Mount Painter by the Friends of Mount Painter between 2005 and 2010 inclusive have been monitored annually to establish how well they have survived.

- Around a quarter of the tubestock planted in 2005 survived their first year of life.
- Changes in planting technique and after care in subsequent years resulted in better survival (56 – 80 per cent).
- During the drier years of 2006 to 2008, survival over the first year of life varied between 55 and 60 per cent. With good rains in 2010, 80 per cent of the tubestock survived to one year of age.
- The greatest mortality occurred during the first one or two years of life in all planting years.
- With the better planting and care practices employed from 2006 onwards, more than three-quarters survived from year to year after the first two years.
- Thirty to 34 percent of plants were still alive four to five years after they were planted in 2006 and 2007, and nearly 35 per cent of the 2008 and 2009 plantings were alive at two to three years old.
- Dry conditions had a greater effect on younger plants than on older ones.
- Mortality was higher on sites that were high, exposed and/or steep.
- It had been hoped that it would be possible to compare the survival of different species with a view to learning which species are most suitable for future plantings. However, there was considerable variation in survival levels between years of planting for individual species.
- Findings relating to individual species for which 10 or more individuals were planted in different years:
 - Consistency in survival over the first year:
 - Box-leaf Wattle (*Acacia buxifolia*) (53 – 54 per cent in 2006 and 2010 plantings)
 - Red-leaf Wattle (*A. rubida*) (87 – 89 per cent in 2008 and 2010 plantings)
 - Dollybush, Sifting Bush, Cauliflower Bush (*Cassinia* spp). (57 – 61 per cent in 2007 and 2008 plantings)
 - Variation in survival over the first year
 - Ovens Wattle (*Acacia pravissima*) (40 – 88 per cent in 2006 and 2010 plantings)
 - Narrow-leaf Bitter Pea (*Daviesia mimosoides*)(50 - 85 per cent in 2008 and 2010 plantings)
 - Hopbush (*Dodonaea viscosa*) (48 – 85 per cent in 2006, 2008 and 2010 plantings)

- False Sarsparilla (*Hardenbergia violacea*) (53 – 82 per cent in 2006 and 2010 plantings)
- Australian Indigo (*Indigofera australis*) (46 – 60 per cent in 2006 and 2007 plantings)
- Sticky Everlasting (*Xerochrysum viscosum*) (39 – 58 per cent in 2006 and 2007 plantings)
- All acacias (48 – 79 per cent in 2006 – 2008 and 2010 plantings)
- All eucalypts (54 – 100 per cent in 2006 – 2008 and 2010 plantings)
- Survival beyond one year of age: there are a few species for which there are records over several years after planting. Among those there are:
 - Box-leaf Wattle, Early Wattle (*A. genistifolia*), Lightwood (*A. implexa*), Ovens Wattle and Hopbush which showed steady survival after early mortality;
 - Dollybush (*Cassinia aculeata*), Clustered Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum semipapposum*), Narrow-leaf Bitter Pea, *Hakea sericea* (no common name), Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*) and Sticky Everlasting which continued to decline substantially over all years after planting; and
 - *Cassinia* spp., *Hardenbergia* and Australian Indigo maintained steady numbers after initial mortality for certain planting years and showed continuing decline over the years for other planting years.
- Despite flowering and setting seed, there has been no sign of regeneration from planted *Cassinias* and Sticky Everlasting. This may be due to the dense ground cover of the potential parent plants and/or damage by kangaroos and rabbits.
- Based on the limited information available so far, supplemented by other observations, the following suggestions are made with regard to future planting on Mount Painter:
 - Acacias and Narrow-leaf Hopbush can be expected to survive well.
 - Eucalypts and *Hardenbergia* are less reliable, with *Hardenbergia* in particular requiring careful selection of sites for planting. Putting the latter near rocks is useful.
 - A better return for effort will be achieved by concentrating on longer-lived species. Avoid short-lived annuals and colonising species such as *Cassinia*.
 - *Hakea sericea* and Australian Indigo should also be avoided.
- Friends of Mount Painter intend to continue monitoring on the reserve and will be interested to see how far the higher rainfall in 2010 and 2011 continues to affect tubestock survival, and whether the suggestions made above require qualification to reflect conditions of both the earlier dry conditions and present wetter ones.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NEWSLETTERS WOULD BE VERY WELCOME. PLEASE CONTACT ME ON sarahhnatiuk@yahoo.com.au or 0424 263 565