



FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER NEWS

OCTOBER 2020

For more information about anything in this newsletter: contact friends.of.mount.painter@gmail.com or Sarah Hnatiuk on 0424 263 565

OCTOBER WORK PARTY

Date: Sunday, 18 October

When: 9am – 12.30pm with a break for morning tea. Come for as much or as little of the time as you like.

Location: On either side of the steep track to the water tanks from the reserve entrance off Coulter Drive. Park at the end of the dirt road that turns off Coulter Drive between the big Springvale Drive-Redfern Street roundabout and the Coulter Drive-William Hovell Drive intersection

Task: Weeding

Wear: Hats and long pants and shirts and you might like to bring your own work gloves

Bring: Please bring your own food and drink for morning tea.



Waterlogged grassland in the Wildflower Triangle

The wet weather in early August waterlogged the lower Wildflower Triangle grassland and has given us a spectacular display of wild flowers. As well as some small flowering shrubs, I saw billy buttons, scaly buttons, sticky everlastings, bulbine lilies, early nancies among others.



An early nancy



Hairy guinea flower

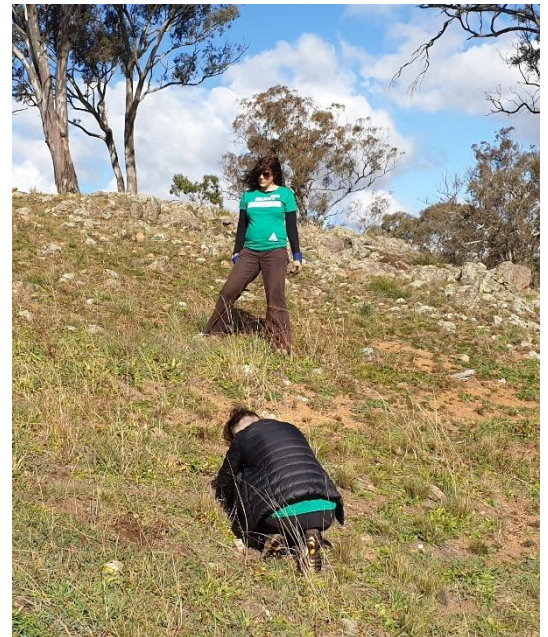


Pelisser's toadflax

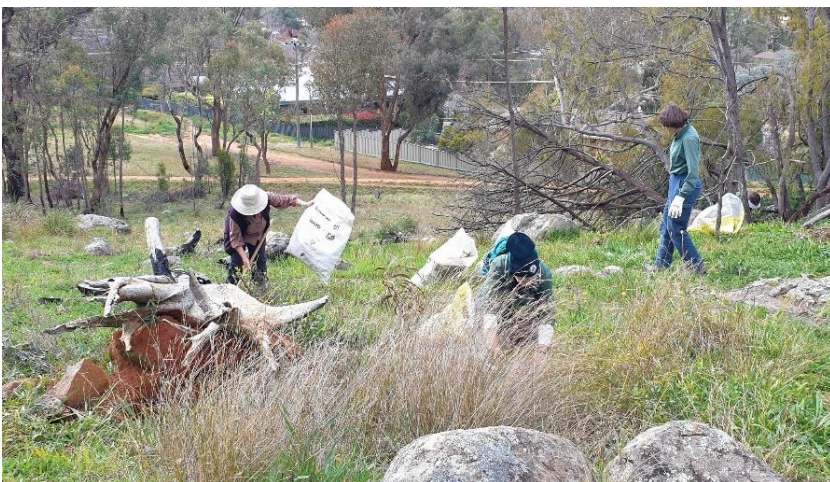
WHAT FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER HAVE BEEN DOING

Weeding. As usual we have worked hard to control the weeds, especially as they are flourishing with the wet conditions. We have focused on Paterson's Curse and the big thistle species on some of the northern parts of the hill, and we have targeted capeweed where it has spread beyond the tracks and is flowering in abundance.

Jo Clay and Katt Milner, who are Greens candidates in the ACT elections, joined us for our July work party in the north-west corner of the reserve, as did several other people new to Friends of Mount Painter. We got a lot of Paterson's curse pulled out. In August we worked on the slope behind the houses removing many different weed species.



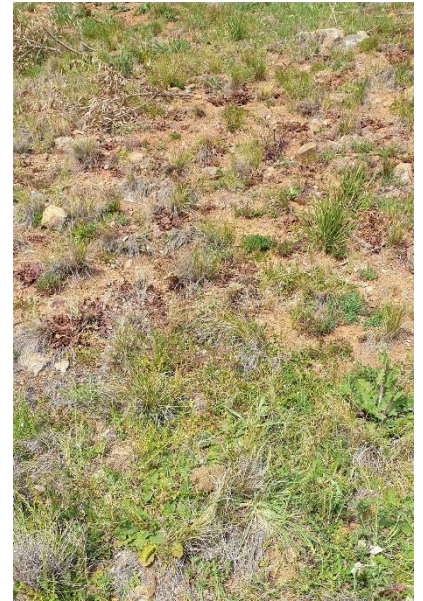
Weeding in the reserve's north-west corner (above) and on the northern slope behind the houses (left)



We have chipped out the weeds with mattocks and done some spraying of herbicide. We also used weed wands on catsear and wild sage with the pleasing result (top) shown in the photo to the right.



Planting trees. Early August saw us out on a foggy morning putting in four cypress pines on the south facing slope of the gully running down from the water tanks. We dedicated this planting to the memory of Noel Atcherley, a long-time member of Friends of Mount Painter who died last October, and we remembered him as we enjoyed morning tea afterwards.



Twenty-five years ago, these two old yellow box (top right) were part of a group of five (bottom right). Three have fallen since then and the remaining two may not last much longer. Learning this was the impetus to plant 10 more trees nearby. When suggesting to the Parks and Conservation Service what we would like to plant, we checked first how well the suggested species could be expected to cope with future drier and warmer times. According to work cited in the ACT Native Woodland and Conservation Strategy and Action Plans (2019), yellow box and apple box are expected to be unaffected by climate change. We planted them and also white box which more commonly occurs on NSW's western slopes and only rarely in the ACT. White box is therefore considered a possible 'climate' ready species for the ACT.



We were pleased to hear again from Nigel England from CSIRO's National Tree Seed Collection who once before offered us seedlings from seed collected on Mount Painter. This time he gave us drooping sheoaks which we used as replacements for sheoaks planted in 2016 that have not survived.



Planting grasses. Near the noticeboard is a small area of rather bare ground studded with several native forb plants. This seemed like a good place to create slightly denser ground cover by sowing some wallaby and spear grass seed we had been given. I got a considerable shock when watering in the seed with a long-unused watering can that I had brought from home. A large frog, about five centimetres long, jumped out, surprised by the deluge of water it experienced when I emptied a jerry can of water into the watering can. I tipped the water out of the can, restored the frog to its

usually safe retreat, abandoned the watering, and took the frog home. Thanks to Ranger Kelzang for helping with the planting.



Wet streaks are where seed has been planted among Yellow burr daisy, New Holland daisy and creeping saltbush.



Wallaby grass seed



Peron's tree frog

It is a Peron's tree frog, alias a maniacal cackler or *Litoria peroni*, that has lived in our garden for at least the last three years, Maybe it is the same one I dug up in my vegetable garden a number of years ago. There is a record of another species of Australian tree frog living in captivity for 15 years.

Interpreting Mount Painter for the Year 3s and 4s from Macquarie Primary School. Once again Macquarie Primary School students and teachers visited Mount Painter and Sarah Hnatiuk accompanied them to the summit. The visit complemented their studies of the way in which the local landscape had changed over time. They could see around them the remains of a once four kilometre tall volcano, remnants of the vegetation the Ngunawal people relied on, cattle and horses grazing, and the city we now live in.



WHAT THE JOBS FOR CANBERRA CREWS HAVE BEEN DOING ON MOUNT PAINTER

Two crews have been working on Mount Painter. One has been spraying Paterson's curse, especially on the side of the hill that drains towards the Wildflower Triangle. We asked for this area to be given a high priority for spraying as it will contribute to fewer seeds being washed into the horse paddocks and beyond to the Wildflower Triangle where an explosion of Paterson's curse followed the heavy rain earlier this year.

The second crew has rehabilitated a couple of eroded paths, one running up the eastern side of the hill and the other running up the north slope from the Cook Memorial block on Skinner Street. It is very good to see the improvements to areas where erosion has been evident for several years and had become worse with the increase in visitors to the reserve walking there during the COVID restrictions.



Working on the eastern summit path



Eastern path to the summit (left)

Path from the Cook Memorial block (right)



An upcoming special event is a bird walk with Nicki Taws on the morning of Sunday, 22 November. More details later.

MURAL



The Cook Grocer has a grant to employ two artists to replace this mural on the west wall of the Cook shops. They have asked the community about what the new mural should show and the overwhelming response was that Mount Painter should be the subject. Friends of Mount Painter have been asked to suggest what should be included that captures the essence of the hill.

Let us know what you think captures what Mount Painter means to you.

THINGS THAT ARE NOT SO GOOD

It has been great to see more people visiting Mount Painter with many discovering it for the first time. There are downsides too: rubbish is more abundant and the full water cube has twice been completely drained. Fires in the middle of winter probably posed little danger, but they and cubby building involve moving fallen branches, and sometimes small boulders as well, that provide habitat for small animals and are best left in place.



Cubbies for hobbits and humans and a fireplace

Compiled by Sarah Hnatiuk, Convenor, Friends of Mount Painter