



FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER NEWS

JANUARY 2021

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

JANUARY WORK PARTY

Date: Sunday, 17 January

When: 8.30am – 12 noon with a break for morning tea. Come for as much or as little of the time as you like.

Location: Along the ridgeline path to the summit. Meet at the gate just above the water tanks. To get there, enter the reserve at the entrance between no. 20 and no. 22 Booth Crescent, Cook, and follow the gravel road uphill to the right

Task: Decapitating saffron thistle seed heads and bagging them, and eliminating other weeds

Wear: Hats, long pants and long-sleeved shirt. All the equipment needed will be provided, but you might like to bring your own work gloves. No experience needed.

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

**Our work parties are on the third Sunday of each month.
The February and March ones will be on Sunday the 20th of both months.**

The next special event is a butterfly walk with Suzi Bond on Sunday, 27 March.



Berry saltbush (*Einadia hastata*) is a new species for Mount Painter. Two individuals were found for the first time last year, one near the noticeboard and the other in the south-east corner of the reserve. Some of its leaves turned a cheerful red just before Christmas.

WOMBATS ON MOUNT PAINTER

We began seeing wombat holes on Mount Painter 10 years ago but sightings of them on the reserve were not reported to us until this year. The young one (left) was sunning itself outside its hole on the west side of the hill, perhaps driven out by flooding of its hole. With a motion-activated camera, Ranger Kel captured a young one and its mother one night and the young one emerging alone in daylight.



(Photo by Cec Sutton)



THE WEEDS!

The Paterson's curse present in the spring has been succeeded by dense stands of saffron thistles and broad areas of St John's wort. The saffron thistle infestation this summer is reminiscent of what we experienced in the summer of 2010-2011 when the drought broke. Like then, this year's thistles are impinging on the walking paths.



Saffron thistles beside the eastern summit path



View west from the ridgeline summit path with saffron thistles in the foreground and khaki-yellow St John's wort behind

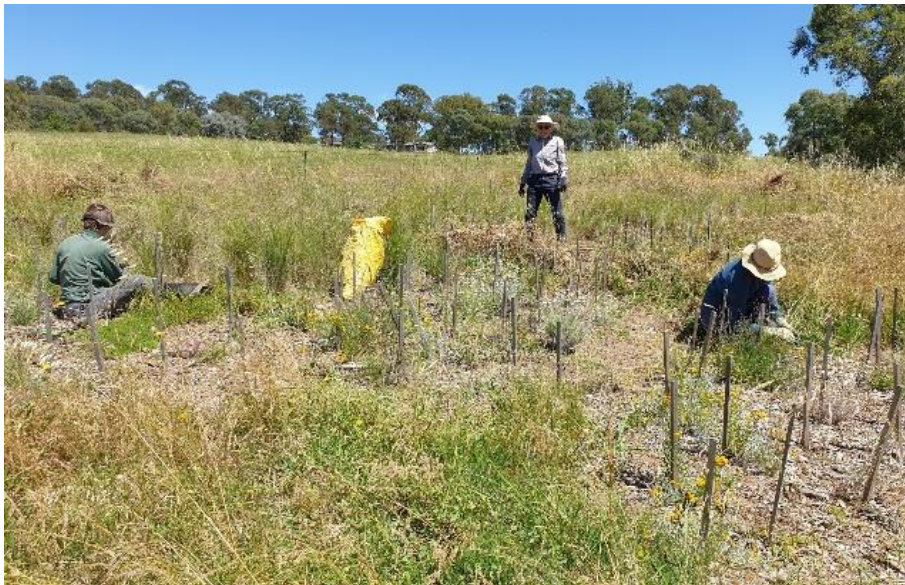
WHAT FRIENDS OF MOUNT PAINTER HAVE BEEN DOING

Weeding

With a monster weed crop on the reserve, we have obviously been doing a great deal of weeding (not always comfortably) and filling a lot of bags with seeding plants. Thistles, mustard weed, Paterson's curse, St John's wort and more are the targets. As always our efforts have mostly been limited to the Wildflower Triangle and the northern section of the hill. We don't have the person power to do more.



Weeding among the thistles on the north-east slope of the hill



Recently our focus has been on cleaning up the areas with native forbs and grasses, either naturally occurring ones or where we have previously planted. For example, we hope that by making space around the daises and lilies planted in the Wildflower Triangle in 2019 (photo at left), we will provide good conditions for them to multiply.

Planting trees

Last year, we planted 50 trees and shrubs in five different places on the reserve. The most challenging of these were on the upper slopes near the summit where we are adding trees to areas identified in the 2000 vegetation plan for Mount Painter but not yet planted. Most of the tubestock were eucalypts (scribbly gum and apple, white, and yellow box), plus some kurrajongs.

These upper plantings were identified as needed by David Hogg, the author of the 2000 plan. In 2019, Friends of Mount Painter asked him how he viewed the progress that had been made in meeting the objectives of the 2000 plan. He volunteered to inspect the hill and recommended planting 100 more trees on the upper slopes of the southern half of the reserve and more tall shrubs. He also commented that there is 'much scope for additional planting of low shrubs and groundcover species'. We are very grateful to David for his help and are now drawing up a plan for future years' plantings to put to the Parks and Conservation Service for approval.



Post-planting morning tea near the summit
(Photo from Jo Clay's Facebook page)

Bird walk with Nicki Taws

Once again, we had an excellent bird walk with Nicki Taws along the perimeter track on the east side of the hill. The weather was calm and not too hot: perfect conditions for birds to be out and about. The 26 species that we saw were the Australian Magpie, Australian Raven (with dependent young), Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Common Bronzewing,



Common Starling, Crested Pigeon, Crimson Rosella, Dollarbird, Eastern Rosella, Eastern Spinebill, Galah, Grey Fantail, Laughing Kookaburra, Magpie-lark, Noisy Friarbird, Red Wattlebird, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Thornbill, Stubble Quail, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Superb Fairy-wren, Tawny Frogmouth (with dependent young), Weebill, White-browed Scrubwren, Willie Wagtail, Yellow-rumped Thornbill.

IMAGES FROM CANBERRA NATURE MAP

Here are some of the photos of little beasts taken on Mount Painter Nature Reserve that have been posted to Canberra Nature Map by Cath Busby (<https://canberra.naturemapr.org/>). They are from left to right, starting at the top: a Common Brown Crane Fly, Purcell's Peacock Spider, Red-

legged Flea Beetle, Yellow Admiral, Darkling Beetle, Looper Moth, Bothylid Wasp, Soft-winged Flower Beetle and March Weevil.



A recent note on Canberra Nature Map reports that new species, species new to the ACT and new locations of threatened animals and plants were found using the many images posted to the site in 2020. In addition, the records alerted the ACT Government's Weeds Officer to new and emerging weed and pest species and action has been taken to control them. Have a look at all the photos posted for the reserve or where you live!

An old, old yellow box! Not on the reserve itself, but in a patch of box-gum woodland nearby.



What does it look like to you?

Compiled by Sarah Hnatiuk, Convenor, Friends of Mount Painter