

## Friends of Mount Majura (FoMM) August 2009 newsletter

- National Tree Day 2009 community planting - Thank you and report
- Horehound Blitz - Sunday 16 August
- Weed walk - Wednesday 19 August
- Tree walk - Sunday 23 August
- Learn a new skill: Training in GPS use and mapping – tbc 27 or 28 August

Dear Friends

The celebration of National Tree Day on Sunday 2 August was a true community party. More than 140 people of all ages joined in on the celebration, having a good time and planting hundreds of local trees. It was especially encouraging to see so many children and young people participate. The Minister for Planning, Andrew Barr, helped to demonstrate how to plant the seedlings, and was later joined by Ms Caroline Le Couteur (ACT Greens) and Senator Gary Humphries.

I'd like to thank everyone who helped to make the event a great success and a pleasant experience for all. A big thank-you to the crew of the North Canberra Rotary Club for the BBQ, to Brian Walch and Peter Synott, rangers with Parks, Conservation and Lands for providing hot drinks and help with watering, to Laura and Freddie Turnbull for welcoming and registering participants, to Bruce Smith for taking photos, to Andrew Blanckensee for organizing the BBQ, to Noel, Peter, Liese, Chris, Ashley, Jenni, Jean, Len, Cynthia, Dorothy, Alison, Anne, Ian, Jeanette, Warick, Lorraine and Edwina for helping with media, directing volunteers and preparations prior to the event. Jenni wrote a report which you can find below and I hope I'm able to place a photo album of the event on our website to share it with you. I'm just learning how to do this so bear with me and check out our website later.

The paddock with the seedlings planted at National Tree Day and earlier in autumn along the drain line will be our focus for the coming season. Depending on weather conditions we will have one or two watering bees before the end of the year. There will be also parties to remove ground cover weeds. We will start with a horehound blitz on Sunday, 16 August.

Garden plants going bush and becoming environmental weeds will be the topic of a ranger guided weed walk on Wednesday 19 August. Local ecologist and botanist Michael Doherty has kindly agreed to lead a walk on trees on Sunday 23 August. Responding to demand Sally MacIntosh, the Community programs officer with PCL will conduct another training session on GPS and mapping end of August. GPS recording and mapping of spatial features provide a useful tool in Natural Resource management such as mapping of rabbit warrens and is a great skill that can be employed for bushwalking and other out-door activities.

So, there will be ample opportunities for you to learn something new, share in the enjoyment of the nature park and to promote its environmental values. Find out about the details of the events below or visit our website at [www.majura.org](http://www.majura.org)

Warm regards  
Waltraud

### **Horehound Blitz - Sunday 16 August**

**When:** Sunday 16 August, noon to 4 pm; join in any time and spend as much or as little time as it suits.

**Where:** meet at the Hackett reservoir off Rivett / French Streets.

**Bring and wear:** appropriate clothing, shoes, household gloves with long cuffs or garden gloves.

Volunteers have planted native shrubs along the drainage line behind the water reservoir to assist the regeneration of a native wild life corridor. At this working bee we will remove horehound which is the dominant weed in the area. Removal of this serious weed means removal of competition for nutrients, water and light which will benefit the young native plants.

### **Weed walk – Wednesday 19 August**

**When:** Wednesday 19 August 2009, 1.00pm, duration: approximately 0.75 hrs

**Where:** Canberra Nature Park Mt Ainslie / Mt Majura

**For booking and the meeting point please phone 6207 2113**

Walk along the urban/reserve interface with a ranger to identify and discuss garden plants going bush, their impact on the local environment and possible strategies to limit and control their spread.

### **Tree walk - Sunday 23 August**

**When:** Sunday, 23 August 2009, 1.00 – 3.00pm

**Where:** Nature park entrance Mackenzie / Grayson Streets, Hackett

**Bring and wear:** appropriate clothing, shoes and sunprotection

Join local ecologist Michael Doherty for a gentle walk to discover the range of trees growing on Mount Majura. See mature specimens of the seedlings planted at National Tree Day 2009. You will learn to distinguish between Scribbly gum and Brittle gum and find out how trees have adapted to environmental conditions such as soils, fire and drought. Pocket tree guides will be available for a gold coin donation.

### **Learn a new skill: GPS and mapping – 27 or 28 August (tbc)**

**When (tbc):** Thursday or Friday, 27/28 August 2009

**Where:** Parks, Conservation and Lands Stromlo Depot, 500 Cotter Road, Weston Creek

**Secure your place by RSVP to Sally** (people already on the waiting list will be contacted and don't need to register again); phone 62057384 or email [Sally.McIntosh@act.gov.au](mailto:Sally.McIntosh@act.gov.au)

The training is free of charge, will take about 2 hours and is great fun. It will cover the following: Basic GPS setup, marking waypoints, finding a waypoint, marking a track, calculating an area, using coordinates; down – and uploading data from GPS to computer and vice versa, displaying data on Google Earth and store data in a format that can be communicated to others for example to Parks, Conservation and Lands to assist pest control programs.

## **Volunteers make National Tree Day a success**

On Sunday 2 August, more than 140 volunteers from Hackett and surrounding suburbs joined by Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA, Minister Andrew Barr and Senator Gary Humphries celebrated National Tree Day 2009 by planting over 300 local trees in Mount Majura nature reserve.

Friends of Mount Majura (FoMM), Mount Ainslie Weeders, Watson Woodland Working Group and Hackett Community Association, joined forces for the massive workload involved in preparation, planning and planting for the event. The degraded Majura paddock was checked thoroughly for hazardous materials prior to the event and given a clean bill of health the Environment Protection Authority. ADFA cadets found time between their exams and mid-year break to dig hundreds of planting holes. Other volunteers also worked tirelessly to mark and pre-water the holes, set up watering stations, prepare water crystals, distribute tree-guards, stakes, weed shields and seedlings.

After a cold breeze blew away the fog, eager volunteers wearing old clothes, boots, warm clothes and gardening gloves, began arriving before 10.30am, carrying an assortment of buckets, trowels and mattocks. The energetic and enthusiastic coordinator, Waltraud Pix (dressed in white and iridescent orange) showed the onsite planting advisers (dressed in iridescent yellow vests), how to successfully plant a seedling. At 11am, ACT Labor MLA Andrew Barr enthusiastically assisted Waltraud in another tree-planting demonstration watched by a large crowd. Senator Garry Humphries and ACT Greens MLA Caroline Le Couteur later joined the volunteers to plant their share of seedlings.

Planting advisors circulated and gave individual help to inexperienced tree planters to give the seedlings the best possible chance of surviving. Five different species of trees were planted: Blakely's Red Gum (*Eucalyptus blakelyi*), Apple Box (*Eucalyptus bridgesiana*), Brittle Gum (*Eucalyptus mannifera*), Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*).

Written instructions were also provided: it is vitally important to mix a handful of jelly-like water crystals into the soil at the bottom of the hole then add more soil, and not to force or pull seedlings out but to tap the pot hard until it is loose, Place seedling in the centre of the hole and fill it in until the potting mix and roots are completely covered. The soil is then gently pressed down to remove air pockets, and watered well. The water should stay in the planting hole, and not run off. The tree and weed guards keep the seedling sheltered and protected from weeds, the weather and animals.

Muddy and dusty volunteers chatted and warmed up with hot drinks provided by ACT Park rangers, and sausages or vegetarian kebabs barbequed by Rotary volunteers. Everyone went home satisfied that they had learned to plant trees with a good chance of surviving, and that they had played a vital role towards restoring this section of Mt Majura to open woodland which will eventually support more native birds and animals.

The organizers gratefully acknowledge the support from the [North Canberra Community Council](#), the [Molonglo Catchment Group](#), [Greening Australia](#), the Rotary Club of North Canberra, ACT Parks, Conservation and Lands, the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA), and [Planet Ark](#) which runs the Australia wide annual [National Tree Day](#).

Jenni Marsh

2 August 2009