

Friends of Mount Majura (FoMM) March 2009 newsletter

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Dear Friends

Please come along to our next working bee on Sunday, 15 March if you can spare an hour or two. We will be tackling briar roses growing at the lower slope of Mt Majura south of the Australian Heritage Village. The working bee announced in February for the same area has been cancelled, because there was rain about. I hope for a good turn-out this time and welcome any helping hand – there are plenty of weeds for everyone.

When: Sunday, 15 March, 2009, 9.00 am to noon

Where: Meet at the car parking / nature park entrance off Antill St opposite Carotel (map: www.majura.org)

Bring and wear: Sun protection, enclosed foot wear and body-covering clothing

Equipment and morning tea will be provided

Please consider car-pooling

Swap your weed for free native plants – weekend 28/29 March

Talking about woody weeds: Most woody weeds in the nature reserve are escapes from gardens and urban public land. If you have plants growing in your garden that have the potential to invade native bush land you can swap them for free native plants on the weekend 28/29 March 2009. Visit our website www.majura.org or come to our working bee for more information on the weed swap and to find out about invasive garden species.

Ainslie tip rehabilitation crew formed

A crew has formed that will look after the old Ainslie tip site. A draft work plan includes weed management and aftercare of existing plantings. Please contact John 62476572 or Jeanette 62477684 if you want to join the crew.

Seed collection

Seeds of Cassinia are ripening and will be ready for collection from next week on. Anyone who wants to help collecting seeds please contact me on 62477515 or email. Cassinia is excellent for degraded sites such as the old Ainslie tip. The seeds will go to Greening Australia's "Seeds for Survival" program in exchange for raising seedlings.

Wrap up of first FoMM and Mt Ainslie Weeders bush clean up on 1st of March

Clean Up area: Kellaway Street parking area to the north of but not including the old Ainslie tip site

Estimated size of area: 32.3hectares (323275 square meters)

Participants: 35 adults and 5 kids

Gender ratio: 70% female

Number of Clean Up bags: 38

Number of Clean Up bags with recyclables: 10

Approximate weight of rubbish collected in bags: 190kg (not including large items such as car tyre that did not fit into the bags)

Most frequent found rubbish: broken glass

Biggest item: entire car (not removed)

Ugliest item: used nappies

Most interesting item: old rusted intact ploughshare

Most useful item: 1x15m² mesh fence - to be recycled for tree guards

News from the rabbit front

Stuart Jeffress of Parks, Conservation and Lands (PCL) advised that work to control rabbits will start in two weeks. Please find below an article by PCL published in the March edition of the Hackett NeighbourhoodWatch newsletter.

Native plants on sale – Saturday 21 March

Keen native gardener note, the Australian Native Plant Society of will hold an autumn plant sale on Saturday 21 March. For more information and to view a list of species on sale visit <http://nativeplants-canberra.asn.au/sales.htm>

Warm regards

Waltraud

EARTH HOUR 28 March 8.30 - 9.30pm www.earthhour.org

Rabbit Management in the Hackett area

Hackett residents will almost certainly have noticed an alarming increase in rabbits in the area over the last few years. Unfortunately this is not just a local problem with rabbit populations all over Australia increasing as the pests build up resistance to rabbit calici disease and myxomatosis.

Rabbit calici disease virus was introduced in Hackett in 2007 but was not successful in reducing rabbit numbers. Parks, Conservation and Lands (PCL) in Territory and Municipal Services will therefore be conducting a rabbit control program on Majura and Mt Ainslie Nature Reserves, Watson Woodlands and Hackett Horse Paddocks throughout the Autumn.

What are the benefits of controlling rabbits?

Rabbits are a serious environmental pest as their grazing results in a loss of vegetation and their warrens contribute to soil erosion. Grazing by rabbits threatens the survival of native birds, mammals, and insects that rely on plants for food and shelter and rabbits have contributed to the extinction of many native plant and animal species. Rabbits compete with livestock for available pasture and kill young trees and shrubs. If left uncontrolled, rabbits will further invade surrounding land including back yards, causing more damage to the environment and private property.

How will the program be undertaken?

From March through Autumn PCL will undertake an integrated control program using recognised control techniques including fumigation of rabbit warrens using phosphine gas and poisoning of surface rabbits using pindone carrot bait. In open areas where access is available, a bulldozer may be used to destroy rabbit warrens.

What is the risk to native animals?

The program will be undertaken in a manner that limits the risk to native animals. If a warren is known to be occupied by a non-target species, fumigation will not be performed. Pindone carrot bait will be laid in a manner that restricts access by native animals including kangaroos.

What is the risk to domestic animals?

Pindone is widely used throughout Australia to control rabbits within the urban area because it has a readily available antidote. It is extremely unlikely a dog could receive a toxic dose of pindone poison through eating poisoned rabbits (secondary poisoning). While secondary poisoning is very unlikely, dogs may be susceptible to primary poisoning if they eat the poisoned bait (carrot or oats). It is therefore important that dogs remain on leads while being walked through the area.

There is very little risk to cats as they would need to eat most of a dead rabbit each day for several days to be poisoned and are unlikely to consume poisoned carrot or oats. In order to minimise the risk of secondary poisoning, all visible rabbit carcasses will be removed for 12 days after poisoning commences.

In the event of a domestic animal showing symptoms of pindone poisoning (vomiting, bloody fluid in the mouth, blood in the faeces), the antidote is available from most veterinarians. It consists of an injection of Vitamin K₁ (1mg/kg liveweight) which counteracts the effects of pindone in the body.

Fumigation of warrens poses little risk to domestic pets and is considered one of the most target specific means of managing rabbits.

How can local residents assist?

Friends of Mount Majura, the local Park Care group have already volunteered many hours in mapping and marking rabbit warrens in the area. Other local residents and Park visitors can assist by ensuring all dogs are kept on leads and that children in the area are supervised. Rabbit control areas will be identified by signs placed at public access points.

More information?

For further information please contact Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.