

Friends of Mount Majura (FoMM) October 2010 newsletter

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Dear Friends

Getting up close with wildlife doesn't take much. Last Friday at about 7.30am I encountered a large mixed woodland bird party just downhill of the bridge that crosses Casuarina trail. I never before saw such a diversity of woodland birds on Mount Majura. Amongst the birds was a Bronze-Cuckoo with metallic green wings and further up on the ridge I was greeted by the gentle calls of five Glossy Black Cockatoos. On my way I noticed the flowers of Leopard orchid, Creamy Candle, Hardenbergia, Bulbine Lily, Early Nancy, Murnong or Yam Daisy, Nodding Blue Lily, Bitter Pea, Indigo, Bears-ear and Hoary Sunray. Bearded Dragons and Shingle-backs are out and about and male Bearded Dragons are currently showing impressive colours and signalling. Jenni Marsh reported of a number of ringtail possums and sugar-glidens on her recent evening walk and yesterday night at the small dam uphill of Jukes Street I could differentiate the calls of four frog species including the "plonk" of perhaps two Pobblebonks. Is anyone frogwatching there? Could someone please record the frog chorus?

We are truly privileged with the bush right on our doorsteps. If you can, join one of our guided walks coming up in October. Please register early to save your place for the spotlight walk.

You don't need to save a place for our October working bee which will be again at the Majura paddock - just come along. Participation at our regular monthly working parties has dropped from a peak of fourteen volunteers in 2008 – our busiest year with 15 walks and talks and 15 working bees – to currently six volunteers. Are there other more suitable ways to involve volunteers in conservation and in sharing work? For instance, would an Adopt-a-Site scheme as outlined below suit people better? It would be great to hear about your ideas.

Warm regards

Waltraud

admin@majura.org

Working Bee Sunday 17 October

Sunday 17 October, 9am to 1pm

Meet at the Hackett reservoir off Rivett and French Streets

Bring sun protection, sturdy shoes, long sleeve/pants, gloves and a weeding tool if you have one.

Some tools and gloves and morning tea will be provided.

Enquiries: admin@majura.org or 6247 7515

We will continue to remove by hand weed competition around eucalypts and mid-storey shrubs planted on National Tree Day. Give as little or as much time as you want; there will be plenty of weeds for everyone to tackle.

Spotlight Walk Friday 22 October

Do you wonder what lurks in the dark on the mountain? On Friday 22 October, join the Friends of Mount Majura and a ranger from Parks, Conservation and Lands for a guided spotlight walk to get up close with Mount Majura's furred and feathered nocturnal residents. There will be spotlights to

scan the trees, but participants are advised to bring their own torch to scan the ground – if only to see where you're going.

The walk commences before sunset at 6.45 pm and will last for approximately two hours. Places are limited and booking is essential at admin@majura.org or 6247 7515.

Meet at the Hackett reservoir off Rivett / French Streets. Bring sturdy shoes, warm clothes, a torch and binoculars, if you have them and prepare to quietly walk, watch and listen.

Wildflower Walk Sunday 31 October

Sunday, 31 October 2010, 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm

Meet at the Nature Park entrance at Antill Street opposite Carotel in North Watson.

Enquiries: admin@majura.org or 6247 7515

Explore the spring floriate of Mount Majura on a delightful woodland walk with local botanist Michael Doherty. Please bring sun protection, good walking shoes, and a magnifying glass if you have one. A recently updated list of the Mount Majura/ Mount Ainslie plant species will be available for a gold coin donation.

Adopt a Paddock Tree

The old box trees and gum trees of the Majura paddock behind the water reservoir are magnificent. Even the dead trees provide habitat for hollow-breeding birds, gliders and bats. The removal of weeds beneath the trees in the past two years has encouraged some native ground cover to grow, such as glycines, creeping Einadia – a salt bush relative – and native geraniums. However, previous weed cover has left a legacy of seeds in the soil that require attention for the coming years. You can give a helping hand by adopting a tree. Keep the weeds at bay in the perimeter of the tree canopy, care for the seedlings planted there and plant or direct-seed local species. Work in your own time, get together as a family or friends group, have a picnic and watch how the surrounds of your tree are changing over time and are attracting more wildlife.

Interested? Please contact the Friends of Mt Majura ParkCare coordinator at admin@majura.org or 6247 7515 to arrange an adoption.

Out and About: Lizards on the Move

Spring has arrived and love is in the air for the scaly residents of Mount Majura. The lizards have emerged from hibernation and are on the move to find a mate. On your walk you might come across a Shingle-back, a Bearded Dragon or a Jacky Lizard, which are the more common lizards living on Mount Majura. Many of the lizards such as the Bearded Dragon rely on camouflage for protection and are difficult to spot when they bask motionless in the sun. If camouflage fails, some of the lizards resort to defensive behaviour: they fully open the mouth and show the colourful interior or their blue tongue. The Bearded Dragons' defensive stance is more spectacular. In addition to showing the interior of their mouth the dragon extends the "beard" and enlarges the body by expanding the ribs.

Lizards are harmless and have no defence against dogs. They are often caught by dogs and can suffer crushing injuries. In the past 15 months, 44% of injured lizards brought to the RSCPA have been the victim of a dog attack. So please, when you walk your dog in the nature reserve, keep it on the leash at all times.

This will help to keep lizards safe in your local bushland.