

Friends of Mount Majura (FoMM) Newsletter March 2013

- * Movie on the impact of grazing – a FoMM production
- * Working party at the Fair – Sunday 17 March, morning
- * Rescheduled Ant walk – Sunday 17 March, afternoon
- * Weed hunt on Thursdays – 7 March, 9.30am

Dear Friends

In Mt Majura Nature Reserve we see the seasons come and go. Of concern to us is that the kangaroos and rabbits do not. They stay with us, especially the kangaroos, which, when they have reduced the herbage layer in the reserve to lawn-like, venture out to graze on adjacent ovals and gardens. In 2009, The ACT Government funded our project "Explaining Change" to demonstrate to the public the relative influence of kangaroos, rabbits, and season on a small grassland area. We contrast the influence of these three factors with fencing, sieving out none, all, or just rabbits, and recording the changes with simple repeat photography. We now have three years of results. A video of the three years of change and explanatory background are available at <http://majura.org/explaining-change/>. A big thank you to Dean for the photographic monitoring, collating data and producing a movie that draws it all together.

In addition, we published photographic essays of the unrelenting damage herbivores inflict on our restoration efforts of a former stock camp at the Majura ridge at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/61627737@N03/sets/72157632823459049/>, and on how grazing impacts on the ground cover and soil at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/61627737@N03/sets/72157631419900742/>.

We made significant progress at our last working party mulching the young trees and shrubs at The Fair planting site. Some of the Hickory wattles have grown to over 1 meter tall. Placing thorny woody weed debris kept grazing and other damage in check. We monitored the site and found new Paterson's Curse rosettes. This was expected given the large soil seed bank. At our monthly working party on Sunday, 17 March we will continue mulching and we'll treat the Curse. We need muscles to shovel wood chips and push wheelbarrows, hands to place newspaper around plants and more hands to tackle the Curse; find below details of the working party.

Due to rain on the 24 February we postponed the ant walk to Sunday, 17 March - assist nature in the morning and go for stroll in the afternoon; walk details below.

Participation at our monthly working parties has dwindled in the past months. Several FoMM volunteers indicated difficulties to attend working parties on weekends. To make a bit more inroad on weeds we propose a weekly workout of 1-2hours on Thursdays at The Fair. If you can, come along this Thursday, 7 March, meet at 9.30am at The Fair planting site; BYO sun protection, drinking water, long sleeve & pants and gloves. We'll be cutting off seed heads of *Verbascum*; I'll bring tools and bags. On 14 and 21 March we'll be tackling herbaceous weeds growing close to plantings - bring your weeding tool - and on 28 March woody weeds along Clancy's track.

Finally I'm pleased to inform you about a new addition to our Flora list, the lovely native and strong scented Slender Mint, *Mentha diemenica*, see a picture at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/61627737@N03/8501267161/in/pool-1724897@N25>

Warm regards, Waltraud

Working party at The Fair – Sunday 17 March

We will be mulching young plants and treat Paterson's Curse at *The Fair* National Tree Day planting site; pick your pet activity.

When: Sunday, 17 March 2013, 9.00am to 1.00pm – come for an hour or more.

Where: Nature park access at the intersection Tay / Ian Nicol Sts, *The Fair*, North Watson; Vist our website for a map and directions on how to get there.

Bring: sun protection, sturdy shoes, long sleeves and pants.

Gloves and equipment will be provided.

Enquiries: email admin@majura.org or phone 6247 7515.

Walking with Ants – rescheduled, Sunday 17 March

Join specialist Ajay Narendra of the Australian National University for an afternoon stroll to glimpse the fascinating world of ants.

When: Sunday, 17 March, 4.00 - 5.30pm

Where: Meet at Helms Place off Rivett Street near intersection with Richard Street, Hackett

Bring: Enclosed shoes and a magnifying glass if you have one; a gold coin donation to support the conservation work of FoMM would be much appreciated.

Children accompanied by adults are especially welcome

Enquiries: phone 6248 8955 or email admin@majura.org