

## Item 2a. Plan of the Garden

A landscapist planned the garden in 2009 on the basis of ideas already expressed by CIF members, and visits to various sites to select the present one.

The key feature is a horse-shoe shaped garden-bed about 120 m long, 8 m wide, planted with 4 rows of Indigenous trees.

Planting was done at the end of March 2011, and the official opening by Mary Porter AM MLA representing the ACT Chief Minister was in May 2011.

The inner row comprised 12 different types of Grevillea to represent, each one one of the faith groups comprising CIF.

Next was a row of about 80 Correas (pink-bells). This West Australian bush suffered from the harsh frosts of the past 2 years, and there were many casualties, now being replaced with other species ( Next was a row of Bursaria (Blackthorn), a prickly sweet-smelling and flowering shrub that provides good habitat protection for small birds wishing to nest there e.g. blue wrens which abounded in the area.

The outer row consists of a Grevillea (Fireworks) since the site is called Grevillea Park but had few Grevilleas.

The ACT Government requested us also to plant some of the tree species already in the area, so that the Garden would blend with the surroundings. Accordingly we planted 12 Eucalypts, 3 of each of the 4 species already in the area.

Thus we have an "inner grassland" of about 0.25 hectares on which to hold meetings and activities, then the garden-bed area covered with wood-chip, then an "outer grassland" with planted Eucalypts, making a total area of about one hectare. On the eastern flank is a depression or shallow gully. The whole area was thickly covered with tall weeds and grasses, up to 3 m high, when we began work on it.

The project was finally approved in 2011, including a Plaque spelling out the 12 CIF members and 8 cooperating organisations - situated at the upper, northern end of the site.

More recently several species of ground-cover were added in the garden-bed area including sedges and Boobialla and some native daisies. Rabbits and hares severely attacked the latter.

## Grasses

The terrain was host to mainly exotic grasses planted when the site was used for grazing, including Paspalum and Phalaris (Canary grass). There are some native grasses including mainly Windmill grass and native Lovegrasses. There is abundant couch grass. This is a low-lying hardy grass that we can consider as 'native'. We are encouraging it to grow in the inner grassland area.

## Weeds

The whole area was weed-infested for decades. The most significant ones are Thistles -of which there are 4 kinds (Spear, Scotch, Variegated and Milk or Sow, most of them prickly and all bear purple flowers.). These are abundant especially in the gully area where moisture favours their growth and spread to our terrain.

Next in number may be the yellow-flowering Indian hedge Mustard, that is widespread in Canberra grasslands.

Another dense occupant of the terrain is Plantain, a common weed that is persistent and crowds out the grasses.

Besides these are wireweeds (pictured) that can climb up and kill young trees; mallow - ground-creeping weeds; swamp dock, and others.

Of particular concern are small patches of blackberry , St John's wort, Chilean Needle grass and African Lovegrass.. These are however mostly now adequately controlled.

All the weeds bear seeds, and if already at flowering stage or in seed, need to be put in bags and taken to green-waste depots in Tuggeranong area or Mitchell, for composting.

Seeds on the site can survive for up to 20 years, so when one crop of weeds is dealt with another will come, but it will be less abundant. So over a period of years we can expect to gradually bring them all under control through periodic working-parties. These are normally held on the morning of the first Saturday of the month; but for youth groups, special sessions will be arranged on Saturday or Sunday afternoons.