



## The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)

(Founding in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)

PO Box 248, Panania NSW 2213, Australia

# Curly Dock Weed

(*Rumex crispus*)

## (Bird) Plant of the Month

(ASNSW Meeting - December 2013)

Presented by Joshua Allen



Allen w/ (Bird) Plant of the Month  
Curly Dock (*Rumex crispus*)

(Josh brought along several stems of the of Curly Dock Weed - the mature seed stalks of the plant.)

The scientific name for Curly Dock Weed is *Rumex crispus*. I feed it to my birds; we feed it to the birds at [Featherdale Wildlife Park](#) where I work. The Neophemas, the finches, the Diamond firetails love it, the Mulga Parrots love it - it's free - you can pick it along the side of the road. I collect it when I am going home from work.

It prefers to grown on the sides of lakes or dams but you can pretty much pick it anywhere.

Most of it is dying off at this time of the year with the stalks being fully mature at about 1m (3ft) tall and about 30cm (1ft) wide. The plants have gone brown but the birds still eat it, it is filled with little seeds. The Neophemas will chew at it and extract all the seeds, etc. They have large long broad leaves that grow from the base of the plant and the seed steams grow up from them.

(Josh invited members to comment or to ask him any questions they may have.)

## Graeme Phipps

It's not just birds and animals that eat it, humans eat it too. A lot of the plants that we class as weeds can be incredibly valuable. In the [Royal Botanical Gardens](#) they have an example of a "first fleet" garden where they grow examples of plants that they brought with them on the first fleet, e.g. Indian Corn which has a very small cob of corn, and another example that they grow is the Curly Dock. The leaves of the plants were used as a vegetable, and not only the leaves but the seeds as well. They harvested the seeds.

## Duncan Macpherson

In England you used to use the Dock leaves as an antidote against Stinging Nettles. You would crush the leaves and rub them on the stings and it would relieve the stinging.

## Graeme Phipps

Here's a question. Does "Cocky" like it? Maybe he needs to be paid for his appearance and to see if he likes it?

Josh broke off one of the seed stalks at the top and placed it on the top of Cocky's cage where Cocky (a 22 year old Australian King Parrot) was sitting watching and listening and talking throughout the presentation. Cocky, who is a TV star in his own right, was at the meeting for his own segment- "[Cocky the Talking Australian King Parrot](#)" presented by his family Lyn, Gary and Griffin Dalton".



## Question

What is the best way to present it to the birds?

## Joshua Allen

I just give them one of seed stalks attached to one of the branches in the aviary. The whole seed head just as you see them here. I put it in with the Ti Tree at the back of the aviary.

## Question

Do you collect it and feed it all to them on the same day or do you store it?

## Joshua Allen

I store it in the fridge.

## Question

How often do you give it to them?

## Joshua Allen

I feed it to them twice a week.

*There being no further questions, Graeme thanked Joshua for his presentation of "Curly Dock Weed" as the (Bird) Plant of the month.*

**Wikipedia** - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumex\\_crispus#Uses\\_and\\_toxicity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumex_crispus#Uses_and_toxicity)

"It can be used as a wild leaf vegetable; the young leaves should be boiled in several changes of water to remove as much of the [oxalic acid](#) in the leaves as possible or can be added directly to salads in moderate amounts.<sup>[6]</sup> Once the plant matures it becomes too bitter to consume. Dock leaves are an excellent source of both [vitamin A](#) and [protein](#), and are rich in [iron](#) and [potassium](#).<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Curly Dock leaves are somewhat tart due to the presence of high levels of [oxalic acid](#), and although quite palatable, this plant should only be consumed in moderation as it can irritate the urinary tract and increase the risk of developing [kidney stones](#).

The [Zuni people](#) apply a [poultice](#) of the powdered root to sores, rashes and skin infections, and use [infusion](#) of the root for [athlete's foot](#).<sup>[6]</sup>"

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**The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW):** <http://www.aviculturalsocietynsw.org>

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