

Friends of WESI update

August 2016

Welcome to the August edition of the Friends of WESI update. This is the first update using our new format.

It's confirmed!

A couple of weeks ago we had the pleasure of meeting Shona and Dr Bob Chinnock from South Australia (Image 1). Bob is a botanist and author of a field guide to opuntoid cacti. Bob has helped us identify the mystery invasive cactus at Warracknabeal Rifle Range Flora Reserve in the Wimmera, Victoria.



Image 1: Dr Bob Chinnock demonstrating to DELWP and Parks Victoria staff how to make a cacti specimen.

Turns out it is a deformed Riverina Pear (*Opuntia elata*) that grows normally in other parts of the reserve (see images 2 & 3). Perhaps it has been poisoned or is being affected by the old tip on which it is growing. Bob shared his knowledge about cacti and taking herbarium specimens with us and some local staff from Parks Victoria.

Bob also confirmed that the Hudson Pear that is infesting the Warracknabeal Rifle Range Flora Reserve is in fact Brown-spined Hudson Pear (*Cylindropuntia tunicata*)



Image 2: Deformed *Opuntia elata* pad (left) with normal *Opuntia elata* pad (right)



Image 3: Deformed *Opuntia elata* infestation

Weed in the spotlight.... Buffel Grass

The WESI project was alerted to the occurrence of Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) in the Mallee back in 2014. A lot of hard work has gone into locating, identifying and treating Buffel Grass in the Mallee by local VicRoads, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Parks Victoria staff over the years. A map of the current distribution and treatment of Buffel Grass in north west Victoria is provided as an additional attachment.



Image 4: Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*)

Buffel Grass – *Cenchrus ciliaris*

- Buffel Grass is an invasive deep-rooted perennial grass (Image 4).
- Buffel Grass also has rapid regrowth and high biomass that can alter the intensity, frequency and extent of fires and can change vegetation structure and composition.
- Buffel Grass poses a significant threat to native Mallee habitats. South Australia's Buffel Grass Strategic Plan 2012–2017 indicates the Environment and Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC) listed endangered Mallee emu-wren (*Stipiturus mallee*) and vulnerable Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*) as species that are considered to be threatened by the occurrence of Buffel Grass.
- In Victoria, the largest infestation is along the Sturt Highway at Cullulleraine (Image 5).

If you know about any infestations of Buffel Grass, please get in touch, we'd love to know where they are.

If you would like to know more about Buffel Grass, have a look at the fantastic link below from Primary Industries and Regions South Australia:

http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds_and_pest_animals/weeds_in_sa/weed_id/plant_id/notes/buffel_grass#



Image 5: Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) at Cullulleraine

Upcoming WESI training events

We are excited to announce two upcoming weed ID sessions that the WESI project team will be running. These will be focussed on environmental weeds at the early stage of invasion in Wimmera and Far south-west of Victoria. Topics that we will focus on include:

- Detailed look at eight weeds at the early stage of invasion in the geographic area, incl. treatment options
- How to identify a weed
- Resources available to help with the identification of plants
- How to act
- Weed hygiene

The Wimmera weed ID session is planned for **Thursday 13 October 2016** and the Far south-west is scheduled for **Thursday 10 November 2016**.

For more information check out the session flyer attached to the original email.



Weedy native Acacia's

Many Australian native plants have moved beyond their natural range usually carried by humans for ornamental and other uses. The Cootamundra Wattle (*Acacia baileyana*) and the Early Black Wattle or Sydney Green Wattle (*Acacia decurrens*) are both species from NSW that have become invasive in Victoria. They are also able to hybridise with each other and the hybrid is invasive. Look more carefully this winter at the Acacias flowering in your area. These images taken recently on a roadside at Beaufort.

Perth preparation

We will be presenting at the 20th Australasian Weeds Conference in Perth WA 12-15 September 2016. We have lots of preparation to do including creating some posters of our WESI work. We are looking forward to sharing our knowledge and learning from others about early invaders. You can follow conference activities by using #20awc on social media.



Acacia baileyana
Cootamundra Wattle



Acacia hybrid
hybrid wattle



Acacia hybrid
hybrid wattle



Acacia decurrens
Early Black or
Sydney Green Wattle

Introduced parents and hybrid wattles on a roadside at Beaufort, Victoria, 31 July 2016 (Kate Blood).

Till next time!

Bec & Kate
The WESI Project Team

If you do not wish to receive these emails, please reply 'unsubscribe' and we will remove you from the list. We will not be sharing your details beyond our project.

