

March 2017

Welcome to the March edition of the Friends of WESI update.

WESI Pilot evaluation update

The Weeds at the Early Stage of Invasion (WESI) Project has initiated 14 pilot projects (Figure 1) across Victoria. The aim is to test and refine the early invader tools and to introduce the tools to regional staff.

Currently an evaluation of the pilots is underway. This will provide valuable feedback on how the process is working in the field, and make it easier to implement in the future.



Figure 1: Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management and Green Army conducting delimiting survey on the Bellarine Peninsula

Credit: Bec James, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

Weed in the spotlight...

Sicilian Sea Lavender (*Limonium hyblaenum*)

This low-growing perennial plant is from Sicily and forms dense mounds (Figure 2) preventing the growth of indigenous plants. It can invade limestone, saltmarsh and inland areas and cope with tidal inundation.

It's mostly mauve papery flowers appear in open clusters from late summer into winter. The plants grow in clumps that join together. It spreads with underground stems called rhizomes. The seeds are spread by people, water and machinery. There are a number of invaded sites along Victoria's west coast and

it was found on Phillip Island in 2013, the most easterly record in Victoria.



Figure 2: Sicilian Sea Lavender growing over rocks at Port Fairy
Credit: Bec James, DELWP

Tips for taking photos for help with ID

Did you know that WESI has published a weed photography guide? It is available in guide #2 'name and notify' available at www.delwp.vic.gov.au/early-invaders

We have been sharing some photo tips (Figure 3) on social media including this example for brooms:

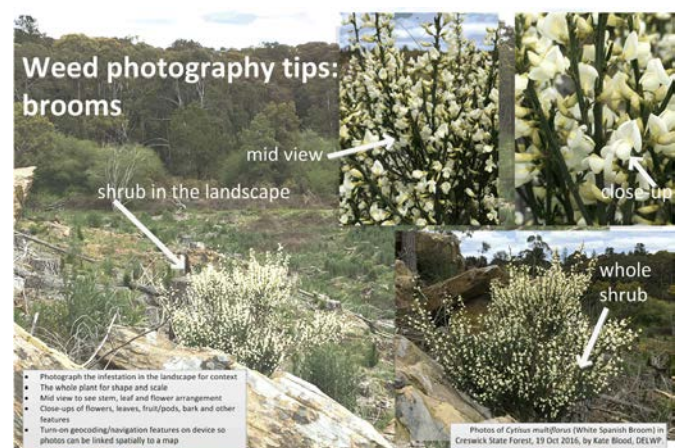


Figure 3: Broom photography guide

Credit: Kate Blood, DELWP

You will be able to find the easier to read on-screen version in our social media feeds on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram at @weedyk8

Opuntoid cacti workshop in Epsom

A successful forum for cacti managers was held at the DELWP Epsom office at Bendigo on Tuesday 14 February 2017 facilitated by Matt Sheehan of Wild Matters, the consultancy putting together a national Opuntoid cacti best practice management guide.

Individuals and groups shared their knowledge to help prepare the manual and a supporting issues paper.

Some of the take-home messages were:

- there are probably 24 species of Opuntoid cacti invading in Victoria (many are early invaders)
- invasive cacti pose a significant threat to natural areas in Victoria
- there are gaps in our knowledge about aspects of Opuntoid biology and ecology, identification skills, and distribution

These gaps present us with lots of opportunities and invasive cacti remain an important issue for WESI.

The WESI team have developed an invasive cacti safety guideline for Victorian field workers.

Look out for Giant Willow Herb

Giant Willow Herb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) is native to Britain and other parts of Europe. It is a tall (80 cm to 1.8 m) perennial herb, that spreads by seed and rhizomes. It has bright rose-purple flowers to 2.5 cm diameter with four petals (Figure 4). Its slender seed capsules are to 8 cm long and split into four valves releasing many seed with downy hairs. It has become a weed in some wetlands in USA and has been recorded west of Melbourne, at Buninyong and around the Barwon region.



Figure 4: Giant Willow Herb along Union Jack Creek at Buninyong

Credit: Kate Blood, DELWP

Til next time!

Follow us on social media @weedyk8



Bec & Kate
The WESI Project Team

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