

January 2020 #17

Welcome to the summer edition of the Early Invader Update

Another great WESI training session delivered

The WESI team has been on the road again delivering another weed identification training session, this time with Cardinia Shire.

Weather-wise, it was a stinker of a day. Despite the very windy and hot summery conditions, 26 attendees came along to participate in our training delivered at the Cardinia Shire Office in Officer near Melbourne on Thursday 21st November 2019.



Figure 1: Ready to go, about to start the workshop.

Credit: Bianca Gold (DELWP).

For a little insight into the WESI training preparations, we spend the day before, fossicking for weeds in the local area to collect for display in the training venue. It allowed us to provide a range of weeds in one location rather than visiting many sites in the field. We often receive favourable feedback about this aspect of the training e.g. “*having samples on site from the local area [was] very beneficial.*”

During the Cardinia Shire training session WESI shared information about six environmental weed species that are either early invaders within the shire boundary or have potential to be so. We explained the WESI process and tools available to help manage early invader weed infestations and gave tips on getting positive identification of a weed.



Figure 2: One of the featured weeds— White Climbing-sage (*Buddleja dysophylla*).

Credit: Kate Blood (DELWP).

A great diversity of participants attended including Cardinia Shire, Baw Baw Shire, City of Casey, Parks Victoria, DELWP, Regional Roads Victoria, V/Line, Macclesfield Landcare Group, contractors, consultants, local community groups and conservation property landholders.



Figure 3: Madeira Vine (*Anredera cordifolia*) near Garfield.

Credit: Kate Blood (DELWP).

Early Invader Update

At the end of the session we enjoyed reading the comments on the evaluation forms. Some of the participants are returnees, having attended previous sessions in other areas and summarised nicely: “Thanks for a great WESI session as always! Your team may be small, but your message is mighty”. Other first-time attendees commented: “Well presented by both presenters, Kate and Bianca. Delivered their professional knowledge to a receptive group.” Thanks for the great feedback!

A new year resolution for early invader management

With the start of the calendar year, new year resolutions made and all that jazz, it makes for a great time to plan for a new approach to early invader weeds.

We recently shared a quote from an article by Keith McDougall about Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) in Kosciuszko National Park on our social media profile. We think it captures the WESI approach nicely:

“Our greatest regret is not commencing control until Ox-eye Daisy was a problem. If the species had been treated when it was known only from small patches close to Nungar Creek in the 1990s, it would not have expanded to its current extent. The clear message from this is: remove non-native plant species when they are rare because, although most might never amount to much, some will and the consequences and cost of management are then huge”.



Figure 4: Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) in Kosciuszko National Park NSW. Site in photo was burnt in 2007, but otherwise undisturbed.

Credit: Elouise Peach (via Keith McDougall), Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW.

Why not kick your new year off on a great footing by starting with the templates in the “Early invader manual”. The manual is loaded with information and templates to guide you through dealing with early invaders.

You might like to start with the decision-making framework (below and enlarged in the manual) to guide you through the process of dealing with these threats. Three typical scenarios faced by public land and biodiversity managers are given.

Scenario A helps to work out the highest priority weed already in your patch, and Scenario C helps to work out the highest priority weed outside your patch that may be a threat. Scenario B helps you to make a decision about a new discovery of an early invader within your patch.

Appendix A Decision making framework – with scenarios

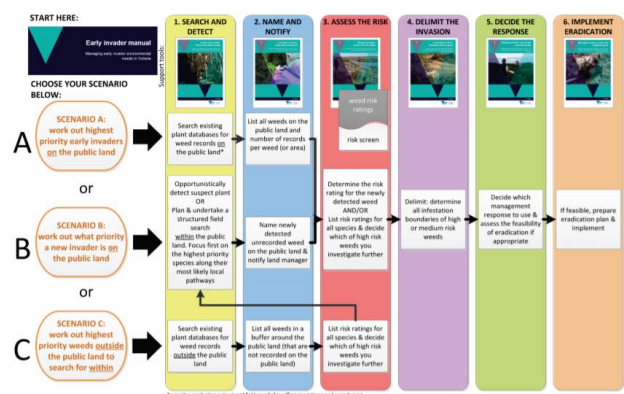


Figure 5: Decision Making Framework – with scenarios.

Credit: Appendix A in the “Early invader manual”.

Both the “Early invader manual” and the set of six supporting guides can be downloaded from our webpage <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/invasive-plants-and-animals/early-invaders>.

Photography tips

When taking photos on your mobile device, check and avoid shadow (yours or your device’s) in photographs. Alternatively, you can use a shadow to enhance white flowers when taking pictures – it reduces flaring.

Use back-light to enhance fine features on a weed such as spines on a cactus or seed heads of grasses. Have the sun behind the subject matter to illuminate features from behind.

Early Invader Update

Bushfire season and weeds

This bushfire season is well and truly upon us here in Victoria and across the country. While most of us are aware of the dangers to life and property and the impacts on wildlife and native vegetation, it may be easy to forget the role weeds can play in bushfire situations.

Weeds during or after a bushfire:

- Can increase the fuel load and make for a more intense and severe fire, causing not only a higher threat to life and property but also slower recovery for native species. Invasive grasses like Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) (see Figure 6) are a particularly concerning fire hazard due to flammability and addition to fuel loads that carry and intensify fire activity.
- May be fire-responsive, meaning that they come back with a vengeance post-fire e.g. Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *monilifera*).



Figure 6: Buffel Grass adds to the intensity of a fire in Spinifex country in Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Region, SA.

Credit: [J. Stelmann \(DEWNR 2011\)](#).

- Are able to maintain establishment in unburnt patches within the fire area where they can set seed and spread into the burnt areas.
- Can be inadvertently spread by firefighting vehicles, machinery and clothing of personnel if good hygiene practices aren't in place. This is particularly a problem when those resources have come from outside the local area, bringing

weeds that otherwise have not existed in the landscape.

Fire and weed resources

Did you know there are some great fire/weed related resources to help you manage weeds?

DELWP North Altona has washdown trailers available for cleaning vehicles and equipment near the fire line or at base camp. They can be used anywhere in the State. Contact Altona North for details and other vehicle and equipment washdown options.

DELWP's Arthur Rylah Institute has a number of [biodiversity-fire related documents](#) including the "Post-fire weeds triage manual" developed in 2009. It can be tough to know where to start after a bushfire. The triage manual assists the prioritisation of weed species for funding and management after fire. It helps to take advantage of a brief window of time when great advances on treating regenerating weeds can be made, including early invaders.



Figure 7: The "Post-fire weeds triage manual" can be used in conjunction with the "Early invader manual" to help prioritise weed management after fire.

Using the triage manual begins with a list of weed species present in the impacted area before the fire. If a

list does not exist, the “Early invader manual” has useful tips on how to bring one together.

Benefits of fire for weed management:

- Able to tackle emerging weed seedlings post-fire (when it is safe to enter the burnt area) to prevent them reaching maturity and setting seed.
- Accessibility to mature plants that remain in unburnt patches. These can be treated prior to seeding in the burnt area to prevent them from spreading there or causing reinvasion.
- Some species aren't tolerant of fire and a fire will wipe them out!

When conducting your post-fire weed activities be sure the area is safe to enter, before commencing surveys and treatment.

Another note is to be cautious when feeding wildlife in burnt areas. Depositing hay or fodder contaminated with invasive plants can introduce new weed species to a landscape. Selecting ‘cleaner’ hay or fodder is a better option if available.

The WESI team would like to acknowledge the bushfires currently burning across the country, the communities impacted, and the tireless efforts of firefighters.

Weed to Watch for: Giant Willow-herb

As you travel around on your summer holiday keep your eyes out for Giant Willow-herb (*Epilobium hirsutum*).



Figure 8: Rose-pink flowers of Giant Willow-herb (*Epilobium hirsutum*).

Credit: Neville Walsh ([VICFLORA](#)).

The flowers of Giant Willow-herb are a pretty rose-pink to purplish, approximately 3 cm across, with a ring of long white hairs inside. They appear from Summer through to March, making now an optimum time to spot this plant.

Also known as Hairy Willow-herb, it is native to the Northern Hemisphere including Eurasia and Africa and widely naturalised in northern America.

This uncommon hairy perennial herb grows to 2 m tall from creeping underground stems (rhizomes). Leaves are toothed and hairy up to 12 cm long and up to 3.5 cm wide and are arranged mostly opposite.



Figure 9: Giant Willow-herb plant growing among native vegetation.

Credit: Neville Walsh ([VICFLORA](#)).

Giant Willow-herb usually grows in damp areas, often along roadsides and on margins of wetlands.

There are sixteen native species of *Epilobium* in Australia, so ensure confirmation of identification before proceeding with treatment.

If you find Giant Willow-herb, contact the land manager. For DELWP via <https://www2.delwp.vic.gov.au/our-department/contact-us> and Parks Victoria via <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/contact-us>.

Great tip

If you are using VBA Go (Victorian Biodiversity Atlas) on a mobile device in a DELWP office, turn off wi-fi to get better connection.

Early Invader Update

Fun Fact #2

The bark of willow (*Salix* species) provided the first type of aspirin, painkiller and fever reducer. Most species are a Weed of National Significance.



Figure 10: A flowering willow (*Salix* species) at Creswick.

Credit: Kate Blood (DELWP).

For the calendar

If you are a registered [Weed Spotter](#) (for State prohibited weeds) with Agriculture Victoria, you will have recently received the 2020 Weed Spotter calendar filled with great photos to help identify these serious weeds. Many are early invaders that impact biodiversity.

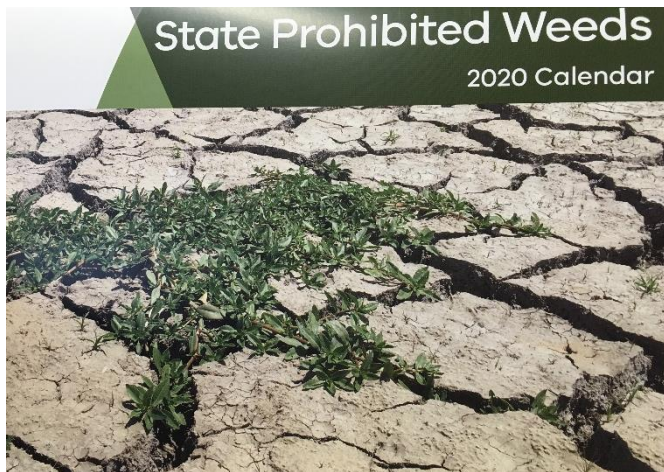


Figure 11: Weed Spotter 2020 calendar from Agriculture Victoria.

It's that time of year to sit down and pop those momentous events in, such as birthdays and anniversaries, and here's a few to add:

Victorian Biodiversity Conference 2020 6th – 7th February 2020, Melbourne, VIC. Ticket sales now open. Showcases projects involving Victorian institutions related to biodiversity (from local to global projects).

Which plant where? National Roadshow 5th March 2020. An opportunity to provide input to the development of an online plant selector tool.

2020 Conservation Dog Conference, 20th – 21st August 2020, ACT. "Working Together: a scientific and practitioner-based exploration of working dogs within conservation." Abstract submissions now open.

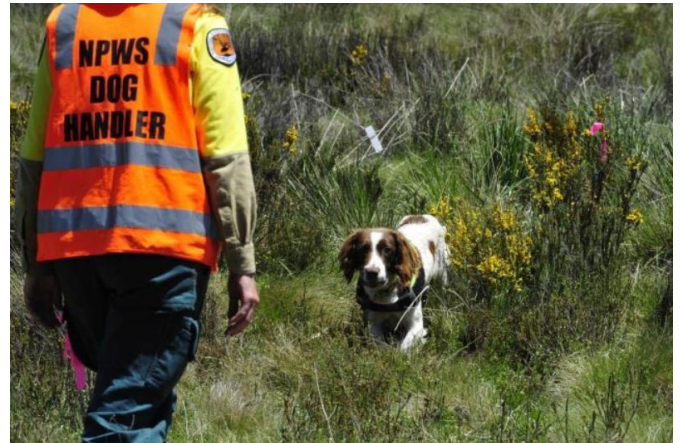


Figure 12: Weed detector dog, NSW Hawkweed Program.

Credit: [ABC News article](#) (Photo supplied by: Glen Sanders).

23rd Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar 2020, 3rd September 2020, VIC. (location to be advised in Wimmera area). Showcases local and non-local projects and research relating to impacts on biodiversity to an audience of NRM professionals and community.

The 22nd Australasian Weeds Conference 2020 25th-29th October 2020, Adelaide SA. Abstracts close 14 February so get them in soon. A range of topics including best practice on-ground management, science and research, new operations and tools, agricultural and environmental weeds.

2020 National Landcare Conference 11th -13th November 2020, Sydney NSW. Register interest now. More information to come in early 2020.

SWIFFT Seminars 2020. Free quarterly seminars with a biodiversity focus helping land managers, researchers, government agencies and community groups to connect and share stories.

ARI Seminar Series 2020. Free seminar series at DELWP's Arthur Rylah Institute at Heidelberg, showcasing applied ecological research. Often available remotely via webinar.

Early Invader Update

High country weeds

Summer is when many of the invasive species in the Victorian high country are flowering, making it a great time to survey. This includes State prohibited weeds, the hawkweeds (*Hieracium* species). Unfortunately, the rest of the annual summer “hawkweeding” survey season has been cancelled due to bushfires. The Hawkweed Volunteer Program has had some recent changes with Parks Victoria’s Yohanna Aurisch moving to a Ranger position at Mt Beauty after being in the Hawkweed Eradication Team for 8 years. Vicki Rickard is the new Volunteer Officer of the Hawkweed Volunteer Program. Congratulations to both of you.

Social Media Hot Topics

Don’t forget to follow and interact with us on social media. You can find us at [Bianca Goldweeds](#) on Facebook and [@weedyk8](#) on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and also follow us on Yammer (for DELWP staff).

#WESIProj #EarlyInvaders #InvasiveSpecies

Some hot topics making the rounds at the moment are:

- ❖ [Mat-forming Cactus in Tennessee, USA.](#)
- ❖ [Ox-eye Daisy in Kosciuszko NP.](#)
- ❖ [Restoration ecology controversies.](#)

Til next time!

<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/invasive-plants-and-animals/early-invaders>

Social media [Bianca Goldweeds](#) and [@weedyk8](#)



The WESI team thanks you for your support and contributions in 2019.

We look forward to sharing more WESI adventures and information with you in 2020!

Until then, happy New Year!

Your friendly WESI Project Team,
Bianca (aka Goldie, on right) and Kate (left)

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

If you wish to receive these updates via email please visit <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/subscribe-free-to-early-invader-update-newsletter-tickets-65007285541> or email Bianca at bianca.gold@delwp.vic.gov.au to be added to the distribution list with the subject heading “subscribe to early invader newsletter”.

© The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2020



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria as author. The licence does not apply to any images, photographs or branding, including the Victorian Coat of Arms, the Victorian Government logo and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) logo. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Printed by the Weeds at the Early Stage of Invasion (WESI) Project - Bianca Gold and Kate Blood

ISBN ISSN 2209-3044 – online (pdf/word) format

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136186, email customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au or via the National Relay Service on 133 677 www.relayservice.com.au. This document is also available on the internet at www.delwp.vic.gov.au.