



TASWEEEDS



SPRING 2010 NUMBER 48

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FROM THE
PRESIDENT

Alan Barton

November 2010

Well the weather continues to beguile me, luring me into a false sense of security about how perfect Tasmania is. The good late rain and mild winter are no doubt providing a perfect setting for weeds to crack on. Something strange happened a few weeks back, my wife found a posy of flowers in our mail box, yep you guessed it....Spanish Heath. No it wasn't me, but it was a reminder that there is never a season for dropping the ball. The odd Gorse is still blooming and Spanish Heath (yes I am now fully familiar with this little critter!) is off and running producing the next generation.

I hope you have all worked up fantastic projects for the Community Action Grants or Tasmanian Landcaring Grants that recently closed? Well....if not then put the thinking caps on and look for the next opportunity! Remember any investment in writing up your project ideas will set you up for an application to the third round of the Tasmanian Landcaring Grants which opens in mid February, sorry unashamed advertising there! But there will be other grant opportunities around I am sure.

The executive is busy developing ways to work with Local Government on weed management matters. There is a lot of good work being done by Councils and we see our role as encouraging that and also helping set the bar for what is best practice to give all Councils a sense of what to aim for.

I have been thinking about the Weeds of National Significance of late. Where to next, how are we tracking, what more can be done, you know the usual questions. I must say I don't know the answers so will do some investigating.

"TasWeeds '11"

In the latter half of 2011 the Tas Weed Society will be holding its next Weeds Conference. We are hoping to keep up the fine standard already set so have started the planning on:

- Themes
- Location (proposed to be Hobart)
- Timing (probably late September - early October)
- Venue
- Speakers
- Field Tours
- Awards Night
- Sponsorship.

If there are any Society members (one or two would be grand!) that are able to assist by being part of a coordinating team for the conference please let me know.

Cheers, AlanB

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Joining TWS

The benefits of joining the Tasmanian Weed Society include:

- an information-packed quarterly newsletter – *Tasweeds*
- a forum to discuss weeds with people who actually understand
- regional field days and workshops on topics of interest
- an opportunity to meet and make valuable contacts.

Membership is timed to coincide with the AGM and is therefore valid for a year from 1 March. Members who join in the three-month period prior to March are deemed to have joined on 1 March.

To join or renew membership, submit your details either online or using the form available at www.tasweeds.org.

Cost of Membership

- Student \$10.00
- Ordinary \$25.00
- Corporate \$55.00

Please forward form and remittance to:

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About *Tasweeds*

Tasweeds is a quarterly publication of the Tasmanian Weed Society Inc.

Editor: Jonah Gouldthorpe

Readers are free to circulate and reproduce material published in *Tasweeds*. We ask that authors/sources of information are acknowledged.

Members of the weed community are encouraged to submit articles to *Tasweeds*.

Deadlines for upcoming editions:

- Summer 2011 – 10 January
- Autumn 2011 – 1 March.

Cover images (Marty Bower):

- *Leycesteria formosa* (Elisha's Tears)

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Making further progress with Serrated Tussock

The Tasmanian Serrated Tussock Working Group met again in September to talk about the progress being made with the management of Serrated Tussock across Tasmania. Members of the group include Councils, NRM North, NRM South, STCA, DPIPWE, TLCA, Coal River Products Association and community. The National Serrated Tussock Coordinator also joined the meeting which was held at a member's home at Cremorne. Here is a summary update on the progress being made in controlling Tussock in Tasmania.

Bass Hwy, Westbury

(first observed 2007)

The site is subject to regular quarterly inspections by DPIPWE. Approximately 18 very small plants removed from site in spring/summer 2009/2010, two very small seedlings in autumn 2010 and no plants were present in winter 2010.

Macquarie settlement

(first observed December 2008)

This small site is inspected quarterly. Only a few new plants were found in 2009 and none in autumn 2010. Site is to be re-inspected early October.

Lake River

(first observed 2009)

Infestation at this location is on three landholdings as well as Northern Midlands Council managed roadsides traversing major infestation.

The major infestation is on a block of 90ha. The majority of this was treated in September 2009. The site is under two different treatments for:

- a) pasture conversion and
- b) spot spraying.

Pasture conversion sites were broadacre sprayed with glyphosate in early spring 2009 and are due to be sprayed again prior to potential sowing in 2011. A large proportion of this block is to windward side of the block so that success on this part of the site may considerably reduce re-infestation of the remainder of the site as well as neighbouring properties as

no Serrated Tussock has yet been found further west (windward) of here. There has been substantial seedling germination on these sites.

Spot spraying was undertaken in September 2009 with funding from both NRM North and the Serrated Tussock project managed by Tasmanian Land and Water Professionals. The majority of this was treated with glyphosate as timing was late. Contractors were on-site for approximately two weeks. Some small areas were missed. Spot spraying has been very effective. Recruitment has been variable, but low compared with blanket-sprayed sites. Overall this site probably produced 80-90% less seed than in the previous year.

2010 treatment began with spot spraying with flupropanate in July. NRM North again funded approximately four days work on the Lake River edge paddock. For the remainder there has been continual contact with the landholder. In August the landholders dedicated equipment (two quad bikes with tank and hose reel and tanker truck) and staff time to the project. An adjoining landholder with a very large holding on the opposite side of Lake River onto which this site blows and who is most affected by it, aided significantly by giving up two days of his own and staff time to spot spray on this holding along with DPIPWE. This was significant both in terms of work done

but more importantly in driving home to the landholders the importance of cooperation and not allowing their plants to spread further.

The landholder has recently engaged a commercial operator to spot spray the remaining infestation with flupropanate plus glyphosate (at low pasture topping rate). This has occurred at landholder expense. The site is now de-stocked which should aid competition after another very good winter.

Other affected properties

(Lake River)

Spot spraying took place as late as October 2009 with flupropanate, achieving a high kill. These former grazing lands have been destocked for approx. 18 months and are now under covenant. There is very good competition and as a result weed recruitment has been very low.

A staff member is charged with covering the large, difficult to access area of infestation. As a result of his survey a couple of large (quarter acre) new sites were found and have been sprayed. New and follow up flupropanate application occurred July /August 2010. Several days by the landholder, DPIPWE RWMO North and staff plus one day x two crew contractor funded by NRM North.



Members of the Serrated Tussock working group visit Calverts Hill Nature Reserve, Cremorne. Photo: Sandy Leighton

Making further progress with Serrated Tussock (continued)

St Helens

(first observed autumn 2010)

Site found autumn 2010 south of St Helens and above/adjoining Diana's Basin Reserve. Recommendations to landholders sent July 2010 and action initiated. Seven to ten hectare paddock with approximately 2ha of Tussock. Two days of works were funded by NRM North (end July/early August). As soils are very sandy, a choice was made to limit flupropanate use to areas outside of 30 metres from minor stream. Glyphosate was used closer to the stream. The site is now due for re-inspection.

East Coast

(Swansea and Little Swanport areas)

The Glamorgan Spring Bay NRM Committee has recently received Tasmanian Landcare funds to continue the eradication and awareness program on the East

Coast. All known infestations have been under annual control since 2009. Another application was recently submitted to the Tasmanian Landcaring grants to continue this program for 2010/11.

Calvert's Hill Nature Reserve

Friends of Calverts Hill have received Australian Government Community Action Grant funding to manage Tussock at the Reserve ('Enhancing community action to improve the ecological condition of the EPBC listed *Eucalyptus morrisbyi* reserve at Calverts Hill'). In addition Pipe Clay Coastcare group received a Tasmanian Landcaring grant and this project will collaborate with the Friends of Calverts Hill to provide complementary support to their current project of Serrated Tussock control and improvement of the

ecological condition of threatened *E morrisbyi*. This will include helping neighbouring landholders in their control of Serrated Tussock to limit the spread to Calverts Hill. This assistance will build upon the 2009 Serrated Tussock Control Project.

After the meeting we visited Calverts Hill Nature Reserve at Cremorne with Jodie Presnell from Pipe Clay Coastcare and Oliver Strutt from Friends of Calverts Hill.

Sandy Leighton
Southern Tasmanian Weed Strategy
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6270 2242.

Tasmanian Landcaring Grants – Round Two has closed!



Gordon Clark ("Stone House", Tunnack), explains to a group of local property owners the success his family has had with gorse control and they are accelerating their efforts through a Round 1 Tasmanian Landcaring Grant.

The Tasmanian Landcaring Grants Program is a fantastic funding opportunity offered by the Tasmanian Landcare Association and Wildcare Inc through the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative. Up to \$20,000 is being made available for landcaring projects that deliver on national targets and provide benefits to local communities and the environment.

Round 2 recently closed and we are very pleased with the response, nearly 60 applications were received. This confirms that the demand is there and that grass roots landcare is busy doing great work. Applications were invited from groups and individual property owners committed to progressing landcare projects that improve the natural values of their local environment. The applications will be assessed for eligibility and ranked in priority order, a final decision on funding selection will be made by early November. There will be a third round opening in mid February 2011.

The successful applicants from Round 1 are already off and running delivering on their project aims. Weed control actions are a predominant part of many projects funded in Round 1. It is fantastic to see the dedicated work of volunteer community groups such as friends of Cunningham Nature Recreation Area and Property owners like Gordon Clark. They recognise that weeds a long term proposition and one blink and they are away again (see pictures below).

Further information on the TLG Program is available from www.taslandcare.org.au or you are welcome to contact Alan Barton on 0428 222 816 (projectmanager@taslandcare.org.au) or Peter Stronach on 0488 404 061 (projectofficer@taslandcare.org.au).

WONS wiped out on the Tasman

The Tasman district has taken a giant leap in the control of priority weeds over the last two years. The WONS weeds Gorse, Boneseed and Serrated Tussock were all targeted, as well as other priority weeds Pampas, Asparagus Fern, Paterson's Curse and African Boxthorn. All known sites were treated in year one of the project, including 31 Gorse sites, 150 Boneseed sites, 91 Pampas sites, and 28 African Boxthorn sites. We were fortunate to have a dedicated NRM weeds officer 0.5 time, funded by NRM South. Axel Meiss ably filled this position. This is the first time the Tasman has had a position specifically dedicated to weeds, and the results speak for themselves.

Primary control was successful in most cases, though the Boxthorn and Paterson's Curse has been somewhat persistent. We have been lucky to have some funds, again from NRM South, to undertake follow up work at all of these sites. With persistence, the need for follow-up control will be reduced each year, and hopefully we can one day claim that the Tasman is free of WONS and the other high priority weeds.

Other successful outcomes of the project have included capacity building of land owners/managers to undertake weed control on their own properties, and motivating them to do so. Numerous site visits were undertaken to assist property owners on-site.

During the course of the project a large infestation of Serrated Tussock was discovered, and a successful field day conducted to up-skill local land owners to identify Serrated Tussock, and to act quickly to control it if they find it on their properties.



Tasman Pampas control. Photo: Axel Meiss.

Serrated Tussock was also treated on Slopem Island, where the presence of major infestations has always posed a risk of infesting the Tasman. Significant areas of Spanish Heath and African Boxthorn were also controlled at Slopem Island. This project posed major logistical obstacles, including appalling weather, no potable water (100s of litres of water had to be transported by boat), site restrictions due to breeding sea-eagles, and time limitations due to the springtime return of migratory birds. The Parks & Wildlife Service and the Dodges Ferry Sea Rescue provided key support for this project.

Andrew Drenen - Tasman Council NRM Officer

Giant Capeweed competition update

Entries are getting serious in the Giant Capeweed competition.

Mild winter conditions across southern Tasmania have made for some impressive growth. Jonah's own entry for the largest plant category, collected in August at Kingston measured 59 x 131cm.

Remember that entries close COB Thursday 23 December 2010. To be in the running for prize money and glory, email jonah_the_g@hotmail.com with the following:

- o A photo of the biggest or tallest Capeweed plant you can find, roots visible, with a ruler for scale
- o The plant's height and width in cm
- o The location where you found/grew the plant
- o Your name and contact number.



Giant Capeweed plant. Photo: Jonah Gouldthorpe.

Winners will be published in the Autumn 2011 edition of Tasweeds.

Bridal Creeper — have you seen this weed in your neighbourhood?

As spring arrives, the Southern Tasmanian Weed Strategy (STWS) asks you to check your garden and neighbourhood for Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*), a Weed of National Significance. As there are currently limited infestations of Bridal Creeper in Southern Tasmania we have responded by establishing an eradication program that began in 2007/08. This program has financial support from the majority of large land managers with infestations (state and local government), NRM South and the Australian Government, and through this fund we are able to offer private landholders assistance with the control and removal of plants.

When this eradication program began in 2007/08 there were only 13 known sites with Bridal Creeper across Southern Tasmania now there are over 45 sites. During 2009 our part time Project Officer was able to increase awareness and identification of this WoNS. Articles were published in local newspapers, identification sessions held with council works crews and a brochure and poster were developed and distributed in target areas including unaddressed mailouts to Richmond, Dulcote, Sorell, Triabunna and Swansea postcodes and letter boxing houses adjacent to many of the other areas resulting in nearly 3,000 brochures being distributed. Several new sites were reported to us by the public.

In Southern Tasmania Bridal Creeper sites cover a wide variety of areas including along the Jordan River Brighton; Dowsing Point (Coastal Reserve and Derwent Barracks either side of the Bowen Bridge); Black Snake Road Granton; Pearce Reserve Sandy Bay; Fitzroy Gardens Dynnyrne; Blue Lagoon Dodges Ferry; Pioneer Park Sorell; Shark Point Road Penna; Annes Lane Dunally; Taranna; numerous sites in and around Richmond; Boyes Street Dulcote; Lauderdale; Droughty Point foreshore Rokeby; Toorittya Bushland Reserve Howrah; Gordons

Hill Reserve Rose Bay; Montague Bay foreshore/ Rosny Esplanade; Old Station Road Coningham; Swansea area; Triabunna township; Coles Bay township; Mountain River and Cygnet.

Plants produce more than 1,000 berries/m². Birds feed on the berries and later excrete the seeds at perch sites, usually within 100m of source plants. Seed dispersed by birds has helped spread the weed along roadsides and into native vegetation patches further afield. Rabbits and foxes also eat fruit and disperse seeds. Many of the Southern Tasmanian infestations are found below trees and hedges (especially Hawthorn, Native cherry and Pines), along fencelines and underneath overhead lines where birds roost. There are several bird species recorded on the mainland as eating Bridal creeper fruit including the purple swamphen, little crow, silvereyes and red wattlebirds and ringneck parrots.

This year again sees us monitoring and (re)treating all known sites as required. DPIPW and Glamorgan Spring Bay Council have been a great support with surveys. Hand removal seems to be giving us the best control result, however when primary control is done on a medium to large size plant with lush foliage the recommended herbicide mix of Roundup powermax® + metsulphuron-s-methyl + Pulse® is proving successful.

Now is the time to check your garden and neighbourhood for this weed.

If you believe you have Bridal Creeper in your garden, or if you have seen plants growing anywhere in your area, please contact Sandy Leighton Southern Tasmanian Weed Strategy on 6270 2242 or sleighton@stca.tas.gov.au or DPIPW on 1300 368 550.

This project is supported by the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority in partnership with NRM South, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

Sandy Leighton
Southern Tasmanian Weed Strategy



Bridal Creeper leaves.
Photo: Margie Jenkin.



Bridal Creeper flowers.
Photo: Jonah Gouldthorpe.



Bridal Creeper fruit.

Tasmanian Weed Alert Network — group of volunteers growing

The Tasmanian Weed Alert Network continues to grow, with around 50 volunteers on board from a variety of industries and interest groups.

The Network has been targeted with its recruiting, seeking to attract volunteers who are associated with major pathways for weed spread. According to research by Sindel *et al.* (2009), pathways for weed spread which can be practicably targeted by the Network include:

- Machinery and vehicles
- Fodder trade including hay and feed grain
- Livestock movement
- Seed for sowing
- Waste disposal.

As well as targeting people involved with these pathways, the Network has aimed to get good regional coverage of volunteers across Tasmania. The West Coast, north west, Flinders Island and southern Tasmania are fairly well covered now. King Island and the north need more work on recruitment.

During Weedbuster Week, Southern volunteers attended a training event held at the Tasmanian Herbarium. Volunteers practiced collecting a good specimen and filling out a Weed Reporting Form in the field, then their hard work was rewarded with a tour of target weeds from the Herbarium's collection.

Matt Baker assembled a fine collection of specimens, which contained many surprises, ranging from the tiny *Isolepis hystrix*, to the spectacular *Onopordum acaulon*.

Thanks to volunteers for their time on the day and to Matt Baker for his work in organising the collection.

If you have any questions or would like to join the Tasmanian Weed Alert Network, please get in touch.

Jonah Gouldthorpe
Project Officer, Tasmanian Weed Alert Network
6234 3552 or 0410 059 027
tasweedalert@gmail.com

Sindel, B., van der Maulen, A., Coleman, M. and Reeve, I. 2009. *Pathway risk analysis for weed spread within Australia*. Land and Water Australia.



Volunteers familiarise themselves with target weeds from the Herbarium's collection. Photo: Timm Newlands.

IS THAT PLANT POISONOUS?



An Australian field guide for livestock, pets and people

R.C.H. SHEPHERD

New Australian book — poisonous plants

There are a large number of plants found on farms and bush blocks, along roadsides, in waste places and in gardens that are considered poisonous to livestock, domestic pets and people.

Is that plant poisonous? will help readers become more aware and familiar with these plants. It has been written for everyone, but especially for farmers, gardeners, bush walkers, pet owners, veterinary surgeons and parents.

Is that plant poisonous? costs \$55.00 plus postage. Available from:

RG and FJ Richardson
PO Box 42
Meredith Vic 3333
Phone and fax 03 5286 1533
Email richardson@weedinfo.com.au
Web www.weedinfo.com.au

Southern Tasmanian Weed Strategy - update

The Southern Tasmanian Weed Strategy continues to consolidate programs for the control of WoNS, National Alert List and other high priority weeds across Southern Tasmania. Here are some examples ...

Our Bridal Creeper eradication program has begun for 2010. See article on page seven.

Our Chilean Needle Grass eradication program has begun for the 2010/11 season with many sites on the Eastern Shore, Technopark and Mornington Transfer Station revisited in September with DPIPW. Signage is being finalised in a partnership between the STWS, DPIPW and the National CNG Coordinator. Signs will be situated at key locations on the Eastern Shore. Some additional surveys will be carried out on the Hobart Domain and Eastern Shore. We will again target residents with our awareness brochure in key areas on the Eastern Shore in an attempt to raise awareness of this invasive grass.

Our Boneseed outlier eradication program is coming along well with partnerships now established with the NRM South Healthy Catchments to Coasts Coordinators in the Swan Apsley/Little Swanport and Tasman/Sorell priority areas resulting in monitoring and retreatment of all sites on the Tasman peninsula, most sites at Dunalley and on the East Coast and including Pittwater Orierton Lagoon Ramsar wetland foreshore.

Building awareness and capability

We are also gearing up to deliver a series of five field hygiene and weed management workshops in partnership with NRM South, Hydro Tasmania and DPIPW. These workshops will target community groups, Aboriginal organisations, council works crews, council contractors including weed control contractors and NRM practitioners to increase their weed identification, weed control and field hygiene skills.

Bringing it all together ...

All of our eradication programs are resulting in the protection of vast areas of coastlines, three Ramsar wetlands and numerous threatened species and priority vegetation sites across Southern Tasmanian. The Chilean Needle Grass program will protect the *EPBC Act* listed lowland native grasslands along the Derwent Estuary, in the Southern Midlands and other native grassland areas found in the region. Our hygiene and weed management workshops will help identify new outbreaks and prevent the spread of weeds and diseases.

REGIONAL WEED MANAGEMENT



Sandy Leighton
SOUTHERN TASMANIAN
WEED STRATEGY

Strategy review

The Southern Tasmanian Weed Strategy 2005-2010 is undergoing a review by NRM South. The terms of reference have been agreed upon and a small steering committee will be formed in late October. A consultant will oversee the review, update the strategy as appropriate including identifying future priorities for weed management and developing a new action plan for the next five years.

For further information contact Sandy Leighton sleighton@stca.tas.gov.au or 6270 2242.



Chilean Needle Grass Seed can easily be spread on clothing. Photo: Matt Sheehan.



REGIONAL WEED MANAGEMENT

Greg Stewart

WEEDS COORDINATOR
NRM NORTH

NRM North partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia

Late last year, NRM North entered into a partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) as a means to provide additional resources for priority on-ground projects across the region.

Many of the weed management projects undertaken by NRM North are completed by commercial contractors but there are often projects that require the services of a group of hands-on workers to complete the tasks. These projects involve works such as weed control, revegetation with native plants, coastal protection works, wetland rehabilitation and general maintenance works. However, the majority of the projects involve weed control that is normally restricted to physical removal and the 'cut & paint' technique. This is where the services of the CVA teams can prove to be very useful.

Through the partnership, NRM North has access to the services of CVA work teams to complete works anywhere within the Northern NRM region. The teams come complete with transport, supervisor, tools and the necessary insurances. The teams usually consist of overseas volunteers but can also include "local" volunteers. The CVA teams are able to travel anywhere throughout the region and being relatively 'self-sufficient' they are able to undertake allotted project tasks and achieve the desired outcomes.

While weed control is not generally recognised as one of the most exciting project tasks for a team, it is widely accepted that weeds do grow in some beautiful places which can result in the CVA teams visiting some very scenic locations.

Some the projects completed by CVA teams to date are;

- Serrated Tussock control – Northern Midlands
- Gorse control – Narawntapu National Park
- English Broom control – Mole Creek Karst National Park
- Gorse and Willow control – Liffey River
- Weed control – Falmouth foreshore
- Weed control and revegetation – Bridport
- Weed control – St Helens and Scamander
- Weed control – George Town foreshore
- Tree planting – Mayberry karst area
- Weed control – Tamar Valley sites



*Controlling English Broom in Mole Creek Karst National Park.
Photo: Greg Stewart.*

Mole Creek Karst National Park – April 2010

A few kilometres west of Mole Creek is the Mole Creek Karst National Park. The landscape within the area is dotted with numerous caves and sinkholes. Within the National Park at a site near Sensation Gorge exists an old quarry where English Broom had become the dominant species. Parks & Wildlife Service staff had identified the treatment of the broom at this site as a priority and due to the rugged terrain, it was decided to use a CVA team to complete the works. The team spent a total of seven days at the site controlling English Broom where plants were either pulled or 'cut & painted' using a glyphosate product registered for aquatic use.



George Town foreshore – July 2010

As part of an overall larger project, a CVA team completed some removal of environmental weeds at a site on the foreshore adjacent to the Low Head Road at George Town. Weeds controlled included Boneseed, Gorse and a large patch of Climbing Groundsel (*Senecio angulatus*), that was pulled out and stacked, ready for collection and removal by George Town Council. The works were completed as a lead-up to a commemorative tree planting day, that was planned at the site by Girl Guides Tasmania as part of activities to celebrate 100 years of Guiding in Australia.



CVA volunteers remove Climbing Groundsel at George Town foreshore. Photo: Greg Stewart.

REGIONAL WEED MANAGEMENT

Greg Stewart
WEEDS COORDINATOR
NRM NORTH

Narawntapu National Park – September 2010

A project that has been implemented in stages over the last year has been the removal of Gorse from within the Narawntapu National Park. P&WS have been developing a plan to manage the gorse and decided to use the CVA teams to control isolated plants that have escaped from large infestations on the cleared areas into the adjacent bushland.

During September, a team of California Conservation Corps (CCC) workers, in Tasmania as part of a CVA exchange program worked at Narawntapu for a full week. When in California, the CCC workers are employed on a full-time basis to work on various environmental projects across the state, with their work being funded by both the Californian Government and external sponsorship. Apart from Gorse control at Narawntapu, the team also completed some park maintenance projects. As the Gorse control in the bush areas is completed, the larger infestations on the firebreaks and old grazing land will be controlled using conventional methods such as mechanical removal and/or herbicide treatment.

The partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia is another example of where NRM North is working with stakeholder organisations to provide additional resources for weed management activities across the region.



California Conservation Corps workers control Gorse in Narawntapu National Park. Photo: Greg Stewart.

WEED PROFILE

Matthew Baker
WEED TAXONOMIST
TASMANIAN HERBARIUM

Climbing Groundsel

Senecio angulatus L.f. (Asteraceae)

What is it?

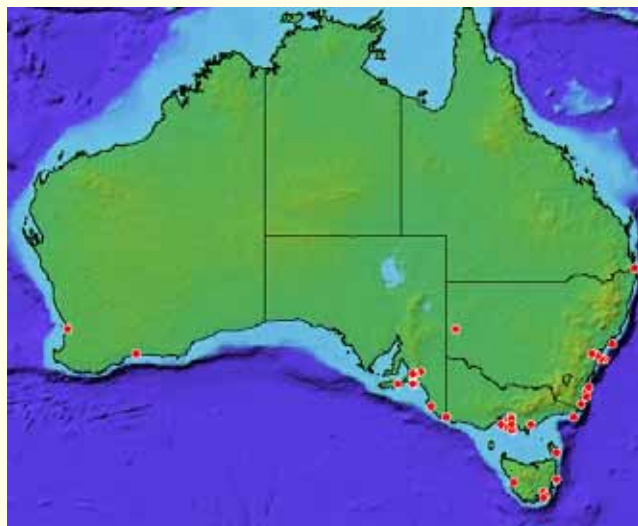
Climbing Groundsel is a member of the daisy family, the largest of all the plant families (1590 genera and 23,600 species). Tasmania is home to a diverse range of members of the family, including the endemic montane cushion plant *Abrotanella forsteroides* and common lawn weeds such as *Bellis perennis* (English daisy) and *Taraxacum officinale* (Dandelion).

Senecio is a cosmopolitan genus of some 1250 species, making it one of the largest genera of plants. Australia is home to 87 native and ten naturalised species, the latter mostly from South Africa, with some from Europe. Tasmania has 29 native species and four naturalised species (*S. angulatus*, *S. elegans* - Purple groundsel, *S. jacobaea* - Ragwort and *S. vulgaris* - Common Groundsel).

Senecio angulatus is native to South Africa. It was introduced into Australia as a garden plant and is now naturalised in Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. It was first recorded in Tasmania in 2001, found growing amongst dry sclerophyll forest at Allens Rivulet in the state's south.

What is its weed potential?

In Tasmania, Climbing Groundsel is an uncommon environmental weed. It grows in a variety of (but usually dry) habitats in coastal and near coastal locations. In some cases it has been observed growing on sand dunes within meters of the high tide mark. It has a widespread distribution, being recorded from several locations including Strahan, Cranbrook, South Arm, Tasman Island and Flinders Island. Greg Stewart's story on weed control in the northern region (previous page) features a Climbing Groundsel infestation on the George Town foreshore (Editor's note).



Distribution of *Senecio angulatus* in Australia. Source: Australia's Virtual Herbarium.



Climbing Groundsel's spreading habit and rampant growth lead to it smothering low growing native vegetation. Dispersal occurs by seed and stem fragments. A common method of spread is via stems being discarded in garden refuse. Plants slashed to ground level readily regrow.

Climbing Groundsel usually grows in coastal and near coastal locations. Here it infests native vegetation on a sand dune. Photo: Peter Norris.

What does it look like?

Climbing Groundsel is a scrambling perennial herb. The stems can reach several metres long and are often prostrate, but the plant usually takes on a large bushy form as it climbs over itself and other vegetation. The stems are usually green but sometimes tinged purple. The leaves (up to 5cm long and wide) are fleshy, shiny and hairless. The leaf blades are broadly rhombic with several shallow lobes on the margin.



The leaves (up to 5cm long and wide) are fleshy, shiny and hairless. Photo: Peter Norris.

Climbing Groundsel can easily be distinguished from other *Senecio* species that grow in Tasmania by its large shrubby habit. One species that it can be confused with is *Delairea odorata* (Cape Ivy - formerly *Senecio mikanioides*). Cape Ivy is a scrambling perennial herb that invades disturbed gullies and forest margins. The leaves of Cape Ivy are much less fleshy, larger and have more triangular lobes on the margin than those of Climbing Groundsel. In addition, the flower heads of Cape Ivy do not have ray florets.



Delairea odorata. The leaves of this plant are much less fleshy, are larger and have less triangular lobes than those of Climbing Groundsel. Flower heads of Cape Ivy do not have ray florets. Photo: Matthew Baker.

The flowers of Climbing Groundsel occur in large inflorescences (4 to 8cm diam.) at the ends of the branches. Daisy flower heads consist of several small flowers clustered together in a group, giving the appearance of a single flower (using Sunflowers as an example, the large and showy flower head is actually an inflorescence made up of hundreds of tiny flowers). In the case of Climbing Groundsel, the flower heads are made up of 4 to 6 bright yellow, ray florets (flowers around the outside of the head each bearing a strap like corolla off to one side) and 10 to 15 disc florets (flowers in the middle of the head). The seeds are very small (up to 2.5mm long), brownish in colour and have a tuft of fine hairs at one end. Flowering occurs from late autumn through to spring.



Senecio angluatus flowers grow in large, bright yellow inflorescences 4 to 8cm in diameter. Photo: Greg Jordan.

If you think you have discovered Climbing Groundsel, please contact Matthew on 6226 1029 or matthew.baker@tmag.tas.gov.au.

WEED PROFILE

Matthew Baker

WEED TAXONOMIST
TASMANIAN HERBARIUM

Why Weed Spurge from Deal Island?

At the coastal weed symposium held in June this year, the question was asked 'why weed Sea Spurge from Deal Island?'

Deal Island is the largest island of the Kent Group National Park, Tasmania's perhaps most remote park. The Group is made up of three main islands with outlying smaller ones. It is a beautiful place, and has been described as having perhaps the grandest scenery of all the 126 islands and islets which sprinkle Bass Strait¹.

Like most Strait islands, those of the Kent Group are composed of granite, their rounded shapes rising dramatically out of the sea. Deal Island reaching an elevation of 300m has a spectacular cliff bound coast with three beautiful sandy beaches. The park flora has biogeographic significance being transitional between mainland and Tasmanian floras.² There are also 19 plant species listed as rare and endangered, some of which are directly affected by weeds.

As well as its natural assets, Deal Island has outstanding historic heritage significance having the oldest group of substantially intact lighthouse buildings in Australia. The Parks & Wildlife Service's vision for the island states in part... A future visitor to the park finds a well preserved lightstation, healthy natural biodiversity free of exotic species...²

Sea Spurge was first reported on the island at East Cove in 1988. By 1990, native vegetation on the dunes there was already being depleted and displaced by the

Spurge. It had also reached Garden Cove where plants were found shoreward of the dune.³ On Deal, Spurge certainly confirms its reputation as an aggressive invader and one of the most significant coastal weeds in Tasmania.

Deal has been manned since 1999 by volunteer caretakers organised by Parks & Wildlife Service. Working bees have also been organised through Wildcare to help both with the maintenance of the historic station, and weeding. The working bees have been made possible through fundraising by Friends of Deal Island and its predecessor Friends of the Kent Group. Grants for weeding have been successfully



Wildcare volunteers working on Sea Spurge on Deal Island. Photo: Penny Tyson.



Boundary between weeded and unweeded dune ridge

Sea Spurge growing landward of the dune in Garden Cove, Deal Island. Photo: Penny Tyson.

obtained from Wildcare, Envirofund, NRM North and Caring for Our Country. Weeds we are concerned with are Horehound, Marram Grass, Arum Lily, Ragwort, Great and Creticum Mullein, Slender and other Thistles, as well as Sea Spurge.

Since 2008 the level of funding has allowed a more consistent effort on weed management. A weed plan has been developed, maps of infestations prepared and weedy areas marked 'on the ground'. A program of regular maintenance weeding has been established to which caretakers and working bees contribute. Progress is being made. It is taking much less time to complete the maintenance weeding than formerly.

Work is progressing too in reducing the size of the two major Sea Spurge infestations. Considerable effort is being spent on these, with Garden Cove reduced by 85% from 3ha to less than 0.5ha, and East Cove by 40% from 2.5ha to around 1.4ha. There is also a large Ragwort site to work on during the next working bee.

This brings us back to the original question. - Why are we weeding spurge from Deal Island?

The park management plan lists as an aim, to eradicate weeds where practical.²

The 25km coastline of Deal is mainly cliffs, with only about 1km of sandy shore (three beaches) and 2km of cobble shoreline. Sea Spurge has established large infestations at two sandy beaches, East Cove and Garden Cove. However, regular patrolling of the third, Winter Cove, is keeping it clear with little effort. Isolated plants have also been removed from cobbled sections of the coastline.

Being about half way between the northwestern tip of Flinders Island and Wilsons Promontory, Deal Island, lies in a stream of current driven sea-borne Spurge seed from infestations on the coast of the mainland to our west. If Spurge is eradicated from Deal, its coastline will always have to be patrolled and weeded to keep it clear. That is, unless there is a national effort which clears the weed from the mainland coastlines which is unlikely.

The observed rate and pattern of spread of the Spurge on Deal Island and elsewhere suggests that left unchecked, it has the potential to spread throughout the *Poa poiformis* tussock vegetation (20% of the island), as well as the beach dune systems and coastal vegetation, all of which would dramatically alter the island's landscape. This prediction is based on the following observations:

- Unchecked, Spurge spreads quickly – first noted on Deal at East Cove in 1988 - by 2008 the core infestation reached 2.5ha. The Garden Cove core infestation, seen first in 1990 grew to 3ha
- Outlying infestations have appeared at 70 to 80m altitude and 3 to 400m inland at Garden Cove
- Spurge is seen actively invading healthy native vegetation around outlier sites, from new coastal infestations and from boundaries of existing infestations
- As it establishes, it can be seen out-competing and replacing native vegetation.

We also understand that there are sites on the Australian mainland where Spurge has spread 800 to 1000m inland.

We believe that it is possible to eliminate Spurge infestations from Deal Island apart from a section of the East Cove infestation, which is compromised by being on a steep unstable slope. (This section may take longer.) Another three years of primary weeding and two more of intense secondary weeding should do for the first step. Maintenance weeding will keep areas clear while seed remains stored in the soil. Twice yearly patrol of beaches will prevent new infestations.

Spurge is being managed by more and more groups - at Coles Beach in Devonport is one example (*Tasweeds* Autumn 2010), and on a larger scale, the work of SPRATS in the southwest. In time, and with consistent effort, it can be done here too.

Bob and Penny Tyson
Friends of Deal Island

References

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2. Kent Group National Park (Terrestrial Portion) Management Plan 2005.
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WHA Boundary Management on the Wild West Coast

One of our state's most valuable environmental assets has received a major boost through the announcement that the Tasmanian Landcare Association (TLCA) in partnership with Wildcare will be funding a project aimed at restricting the spread of Gorse threatening the World Heritage Area (WHA) on the West Coast.

The Project, which is titled 'Weeds out of the Western Wilderness' saw the West Coast Weed & Fire Management Group (WCWFMG) receive \$20,000 through round one of the TLCA's 'From the Bush to the Beach' grants to control all gorse within 10km of the western WHA boundary. The project was one of 16 projects funded in Round one of the Tasmanian Landcaring Grants Program through the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative. TLCA Project Officer Peter Stronach said that the project "matched several of the national priorities that the grant was targeting including the control of Weeds of National Significance (in this case Gorse) or increasing habitat of threatened species which the WHA can easily demonstrate."

The West Coast Weed & Fire Management Group is a group made up of West Coast stakeholders and land managers who aim to control and eradicate environmental weeds from Tasmania's beautiful West Coast. The Group pools stakeholder funds and other resources in an effort to carry out weed management in a cooperative and systematic manner, with an emphasis on community education. Strategic guidance comes from the *West Coast Weed and Fire Management Strategy* (January 2009), a document that's about to enter its tenth year of implementation. The Group is made up of representatives from Cradle Coast NRM, West Coast Council, Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Tasmania, the four mines that operate on the West Coast, energy and water providers, and local tourism operators, all of whom will have roles in the project, vital to its success.

The first objective of the 'Weeds out of the Western Wilderness' project was to determine the area that makes up the 10km wide buffer and to identify all sites within the area where Gorse is known to occur. This was done through communication between land managers

and reviewing historical gorse data collected over the 20 plus years that the group has been active in the region. This newly created buffer zone is over 60,000ha in size and takes in Tullah and Queenstown as well as the largely abandoned but historically rich towns of Linda, Gormanston and Lynchford. The majority of the the buffer zone is under management of the Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Tasmania and Copper Mines of Tasmania.

Once the buffer zone had been identified the WCWFMG Field Officer began work on treating the Gorse. The majority of Gorse infestations that have been recognised or treated so far are small, making management relatively simple but never the less time consuming. Most occurrences of this weed appear to be in areas of recent disturbance or in weed spread corridors, such as rivers and road or power line easements. Two methods of control are being utilised, including spraying with Triclopyr or Glyphosate based foliar sprays (depending on proximity to water) and the cut and swab/paint method.

One of the big limitations this project has encountered has been the wet West Coast weather, which has so far proven detrimental to foliar spraying. On-ground project works are expected to be completed during autumn 2011 and once complete the newly created buffer zone will be recognised in the *West Coast Weed and Fire Management Strategy*, identifying the area as a high priority control site for this highly invasive WONS listed weed.

Along with the Gorse buffer zone the project will also see the running of six community based weed management activities, including three Sea Spurge control sessions with members of Granville Harbour Coastcare, two Spanish Heath control sessions with members of Queenstown Landcare, and the running of an information session with Queenstown residents providing an introduction to environmental weeds and their management. Stay posted for more information on project successes in coming months.

Marty Bower, Project Officer
West Coast Weed & Fire Management Group



Before – WCWFMG Field Officer Gavin O'Callaghan controlling one of the more significant Gorse infestations on the banks of the Queen River. Photo: Marty Bower.



After – The same site following cut and paint control. Photo: Marty Bower