

Australian weeds of national significance

Special thanks to John Thorp of www.weeds.org.au for invaluable help.

Featured are six of the Australian government's Twenty Weeds of National Significance, identified for invasiveness, impacts on primary production and the environment, potential for spread and socioeconomic impacts. Weeds are legally administered through state and territory legislation, requiring us to take steps to prevent their spread and, in many instances, control them on our land. All serious weeds are banned from sale and trade across Australia.

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A WEED COLONISES AND PERSISTS IN AN ECOSYSTEM IN WHICH IT DID NOT PREVIOUSLY EXIST.



Athel pine

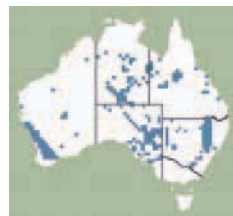
Tamarix aphylla

DESCRIPTION

15m tall, 5m wide. Tiny, dull green 'leaves' resemble pine needles. Multiple small white and pink flowers, bell-shaped fruit with many seeds. Strong, woody, spreading roots.

DISTRIBUTION

Rural SA, NSW, QLD, WA, and inland NT.



SOME ESSENTIALS

Originated in northern Africa and Asia, brought to Whyalla SA in 1930 from California for shade, wind breaks, erosion control and mine reclamation. Drought tolerant and fire resistant; consumes water faster than native plants, reduces water availability for stock and other uses. Concentrates salt in leaves; thus, litter blocks growth of native grasses.

DID YOU KNOW?

Despite its common name, this is a flowering plant, not related to coniferous pines.

LEND A HAND

Prompt removal from vicinity of watercourses is vital to halt invasions.



Mesquite

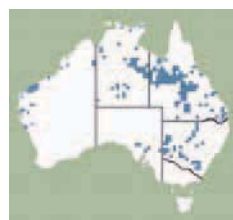
Prosopis spp. (incl hybrids)

DESCRIPTION

1-15m tall; fern-like leaves; greenish cream-yellow, 50-80mm 'lamb's tail' flowers. Bark changes from smooth and red to rough and grey.

DISTRIBUTION

Every mainland state.



SOME ESSENTIALS

Original distribution northern South America to southern United States.

Introduced for stock shelter, food and erosion control. Seeds are popular fodder amongst domestic and native animals which spread un-chewed seeds.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most extensive root system in the world, growing to 80m deep or laterally to 30m, depending on available water. Thorns up to 50mm injure people and wildlife. Can render large tracts of land useless.

LEND A HAND

Lobby government and community groups for large-scale control to prevent the spread of this species.



European blackberry

Rubus fruticosus agg.

DESCRIPTION

Perennial shrub; forms thickets up to 2-3m tall with thorny branches to 7m. Delicate white or pink flowers; berries ripen from green to red to black.

DISTRIBUTION

Temperate areas where annual rainfall exceeds 700mm, especially in disturbed areas.



SOME ESSENTIALS

Introduced to eastern Australia in 1840s from Europe for fruit and hedgerows. One berry can contain up to 80 seeds, easily spread by animals or in soil. Canes take root to spread vegetatively. Trials in place for 'rust' to target weed aggregate without harming commercial and native *Rubus* spp.

DID YOU KNOW?

Young branches can grow from 50-80mm each day from buds on the root crown.

LEND A HAND

When bushwalking, driving or gardening, take care not to transport soil containing blackberry seeds.



Lantana

Lantana camara

DESCRIPTION

Thicket-forming shrub or vine to 2-4 m. Leaves smell acrid when crushed. Small flowers in clusters of white, yellow, pink, red, orange and purple. Clustered fruits ripen to blackish purple. Shallow but extensive root system.

DISTRIBUTION

East coast from north QLD to southern NSW; patches in NT, Perth and Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands.



SOME ESSENTIALS

Introduced from South America in 1820s as garden ornamental; now invades bushland and pasture.

DID YOU KNOW?

Used as food and shelter by some native animals, but some varieties may be toxic to livestock.

LEND A HAND

Join cooperative efforts to control large invasions. Garden varieties have fewer seeds or thorns but can cross-pollinate with and help spread invasive forms. Replace with local, wildlife-supporting natives.



Rubber vine

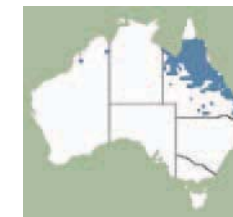
Cryptostegia grandiflora

DESCRIPTION

Multi-stemmed climbing shrub to 30m in tree canopies. Smooth, grey-brown, leaf-bearing branches; long whip-like tendrils; light purple to white, trumpet-shaped flowers to 50mm produce brown pods to 120mm long. Roots deep to 12m.

DISTRIBUTION

QLD; could spread to wetter areas of NT, WA and northern NSW.



SOME ESSENTIALS

Short-lived seeds spread by wind, waterways, floodwaters or in transported soils. Will smother and dominate riverbank vegetation, spreading to bush and pasturelands.

DID YOU KNOW?

Introduced from Madagascar to north Queensland mining towns in 1860s; cultivated as potential rubber source in WWII.

LEND A HAND

Take care not to spread soil containing seeds. Destroy plants before they seed. As a landowner, work with local authorities on carefully timed integrated management and follow-up.



Boneseed

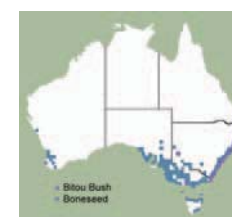
Chrysanthemoides monilifera

DESCRIPTION

Short-lived (10-20 years) erect perennial shrub to 3m. New growth coated with soft, cottony substance; flowers 30mm with 5-8 yellow petals. Mature fruit is black with one bone-coloured, 6-7mm seed.

DISTRIBUTION

Mornington Peninsula and You Yangs in Victoria; parts of SA, Perth, Tasmania; south and central coastal NSW.



SOME ESSENTIALS

Originally from South Africa, introduced as garden ornamental to Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne in 1850s; widely used for dune stabilisation. Salt tolerant and prefers disturbed areas. Spreads in garden waste; seeds persist in soil.

DID YOU KNOW?

Closely related to bitou bush. Shallow roots absorb ground moisture, robbing deeper-rooted surrounding plants. Burning triggers mass germination.

LEND A HAND

Never dump garden waste; support groups that remove this weed regularly.