

Weed Spotters' Network Queensland

Bulletin

February 2015



Weed Spotters' Network 2015

Pathways of weed spread: Gardens

Welcome to a new year of Weed Spotting! It's a great time to be outdoors working in your garden. However, gardens can be an excellent source of weed spread. Here are a few simple ways we can all help prevent weed spread in and around our gardens:

- Have a look around your garden and make sure you don't have any of the plants listed on DAFF's [A-Z listing of weeds](#). Do not plant or purchase species on this list from nurseries, flea markets or from online sellers.
- Avoid planting species which have weedy potential. Consult the [Grow me instead](#) website for great alternatives to weedy plants in your region.
- Request a [weed hygiene declaration](#) when purchasing commercial mulches, soils and fertilisers and be prepared to manage any weeds that may emerge.
- Dispose of weed seeds via your rubbish bin before composting and mulching weeds at home. The seeds of many species can survive composting, leading to new weed outbreaks around your garden.
- Don't dump weeds and garden waste in bush or parkland. Weed outbreaks can threaten our native flora and fauna. Dispose of waste by transporting it safely to a waste disposal facility or burn it, bury it or add it to onsite mulching (without the seeds).
- Restrict the movement of water and fertilisers from your property as these extra nutrients may encourage weed growth elsewhere. Wash your car on the lawn to prevent nutrient rich detergents from entering waterways.

Regional Coordinator profile: Kym Campbell

Kym Campbell has recently joined our network as one of our two Toowoomba Regional Coordinators. Kym has 15 years' experience working on an array of projects in diverse roles across southern Queensland including Landcare, environmental education, community organisations, local government and environmental consultancy. She is currently working as a Principal Project Officer (Biodiversity) at Condamine Alliance and coordinates Condamine Alliance's Weed Spotter program. Kym is also a rural landholder with a keen interest in incorporating conservation practices with agricultural operations. Contact Kym if you need any advice about weeds in the Toowoomba region: Kym.Campbell@condaminealliance.com.au



Class 1 declared plants: *Alternanthera philoxeroides* (alligator weed)



Fig. 1 Photo: S. Navie

and ephemeral swamps, or as a floating aquatic pest of fresh or brackish water, particularly in the presence of high nutrient levels.

Alligator weed has hollow stems and dark green opposite leaves (20–70 mm long x 5–40 mm wide) with a distinct midrib (fig. 1). The leaves are attached directly to the stem without a stalk. Silvery-white, papery flowers held on a short stalks (2–7 cm) appear in mid-summer (fig 2). On land it can produce a deep and extensive root system, while as an aquatic plant, it produces only fibrous roots at the stem nodes. Read more about alligator weed in the [February 2014 bulletin](#).

Alligator weed is a perennial aquatic weed from South America. It is thought to have been introduced to the Newcastle area around 1946 and has since become a serious pest in parts of New South Wales. A class 1 declared pest plant in Queensland and a Weed of National Significance (WONS), it poses a serious threat to wetlands, waterways and irrigation areas throughout the state. It is known from scattered populations in north, central and southeast Queensland, but its potential distribution in Queensland is limited only by the availability of water. Alligator weed is unique in that it can grow either as a

terrestrial plant, deeply rooted in the damp soil of stream banks



Fig. 2 Photo: DAFF

Class 1 declared plants: *Nassella tenuissima* (Mexican feather grass)



Fig. 3 Photo: BCC

from the base. The seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to four years and can be spread on pets, livestock, clothing, machinery, vehicles or as a contaminant of fodder. Read more about Mexican feather grass in the [February 2014 bulletin](#).

Mexican feather grass is class 1 declared pest plant. It is a densely tufted perennial tussock grass capable of growing to 70 cm tall (fig. 3). Its leaves are narrow, tightly rolled and needle-like, 0.25–0.55 mm diameter and 60 cm long. The leaves are finely serrated and have a raspy feel if you run your fingers down the blade from top to bottom. Flowers appear in summer and the feathery seed heads (15–25 cm long) are at first green, then turn pale as they mature between October and November. Each spikelet has a single bisexual floret subtended by two bracts called glumes. Awns (4.5–9 cm long) are very fine and are usually bent at about at 1/3–1/2 their length

If you think you have seen alligator weed or Mexican feather grass growing in your region, please contact the Queensland Herbarium on (07) 3896 9323, email a photo to: Queensland.Herbarium@dsitia.qld.gov.au or contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

Class 2 declared plant: *Pueraria montana* var. *lobata* (kudzu)



Fig. 1 Photo: DAFF

Kudzu is a widespread woody, perennial vine (fig. 1) thought to be native to Asia (China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines) and Papua New Guinea. It is a class 2 declared pest plant in all parts of Queensland except for the Torres Strait Islands. The reason for this exception is that records of kudzu from the Torres Strait, Fiji, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Micronesia and Vanuatu likely indicate that kudzu has long been transported across the Western Pacific and been cultivated as a food source. It is speculated that south-east Queensland populations of kudzu may be the result of a separate introduction from a different part of the species' native range. This is because it appears to grow much more aggressively in the south and is often deciduous over winter. Regardless of its origins, kudzu has the potential to become a serious weed in areas where rainfall exceeds 1000 mm per annum, such as the wet tropics and coastal south-east Queensland.



Fig. 3 Photo: DAFF

Kudzu is a legume with alternate, compound leaves of three leaflets, each up to 10 cm in diameter (fig. 2). Kudzu produces fragrant, purple-pink and yellow flowers (1–1.5 cm long, fig. 3) and flattened, hairy, brown seed pods (5 cm long, fig. 4). Each seed pod contains 3–10 hard, small, oval seeds. Kudzu has fleshy roots and a tuberous taproot that can reach a remarkable 1.8 m in length, 15 cm diameter and weigh as much as 180 kg. Kudzu can grow to a length of 30 m in one season and achieve growth rates of up to 30 cm per day. It is not tolerant of deep shade and will climb over vegetation to reach the sun, smothering and out-competing native trees and shrubs (fig. 1). It can also damage buildings, power lines and other infrastructure.

Kudzu mostly spreads by vegetative means as stems and stem fragments readily produce roots when in contact with disturbed soil. Plants are also deliberately planted as stock fodder or as garden ornamentals. Kudzu can reproduce from seed and is easily transported long distances attached to clothing, vehicles or animal fur.



Fig. 2 Photo: DAFF



Fig. 4 Photo: DAFF

If you think you have seen kudzu growing in your region, please contact the Queensland Herbarium on (07) 3896 9323, email a photo to: Queensland.Herbarium@dsitia.qld.gov.au or contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

Keep an eye out for these weeds in February...

Species	Common name	Watch for in this region	Field attributes to look for
# <i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i> (February 2014 bulletin)	alligator weed	South East Queensland, Burnett/Mary, Cape York, Fitzroy Basin, Mackay Whitsunday, Torres Strait, Dry tropics	hollow stems, white flowers, wetlands and creeklines
# <i>Cylindropuntia prolifera</i> (August 2014 bulletin)	coastal cholla	Fitzroy Basin, Desert Channels, Southern Gulf, Dry tropics, South West Queensland	spines to 2 cm long
# <i>Cylindropuntia tunicata</i> / # <i>C. rosea</i> (July 2013 bulletin)	chain-link cactus/ Hudsons pear	Fitzroy Basin, Desert Channels, Southern Gulf, Dry Tropics, South West Queensland	long spreading spines
# <i>Eichhornia azurea</i> / <i>E. crassipes</i> (October 2014 bulletin)	water hyacinth	Desert Channels, Queensland Murray Darling Region, Condamine, South West Queensland	water bodies, floating, purple flowers
<i>Elephantopus mollis</i>	tobacco weed	South East Queensland, Burnett/Mary	daisy to 1 m tall, flowers white or pink
# <i>Equisetum</i> spp. (July 2013 bulletin)	horsetails	South East Queensland	primitive plant, no flowers, leaves reduced
<i>Heterotheca grandiflora</i> (September 2014 bulletin)	telegraph weed	South East Queensland	daisy to 2 m, flowers yellow
<i>Hymenachne amplexicaulis</i> (June 2013 bulletin)	hymenachne	Desert Channels, Queensland Murray Darling Region, Condamine, South West Queensland	robust grass to 2.5 m, water bodies & drains
# <i>Limnocharis flava</i> (October 2013 bulletin)	yellow burrhead	South East Queensland, Burnett/Mary, Cape York, Mackay Whitsunday, Torres Strait, Wet Tropics, Dry Tropics	water bodies & margins, yellow flowers & triangular stems
# <i>Mikania micrantha</i> (November 2013 bulletin)	mikania vine	South East Queensland, Burnett/Mary, Cape York, Mackay Whitsunday, Torres Strait, Wet Tropics, Dry Tropics	heart shaped leaf & smothering habit
# <i>Nassella tenuissima</i> (February 2014 bulletin)	Mexican feather grass	Queensland Murray Darling Region, Condamine, Fitzroy Basin	tufted grass, spindling leaves
# <i>Neptunia oleraceae</i> / <i>N. plena</i> (June 2013 bulletin)	water mimosa	South East Queensland, Burnett/Mary, Cape York, Fitzroy Basin, Mackay Whitsunday, Torres Strait, Wet Tropics, Dry Tropics	floating & taking over a water body, ferny leaf
<i>Pistia stratiotes</i> (November 2014 bulletin)	water lettuce	Desert Channels, Queensland Murray Darling Region, Condamine, South West Queensland	water bodies, resembles a small open lettuce

Species (cont.)	Common name	Watch for in this region	Field attributes to look for
# Pithecellobium dulce (March 2014 bulletin)	Madras thorn	Cape York, Fitzroy Basin, Southern Gulf, Northern Gulf, Dry tropics	pair of spines at leaf base, small white flowers, segmented curved pods
Pueraria montana var. lobata (this issue)	kudzu	South East Queensland, Burnett/Mary	vine with fragrant purple-pink flowers
Salvinia molesta (November 2013 bulletin)	salvinia	Desert Channels, Queensland Murray Darling Region, Condamine, South West Queensland	water bodies, leaves with water repellent hairs
Senecio madagascariensis (August 2014 bulletin)	fireweed	Wet Tropics	daisy to 60 cm, flowers yellow
Solanum viarum (April 2013 bulletin)	tropical soda apple	Burnett/Mary, Fitzroy Basin, Northern Gulf, Mackay Whitsunday, Dry Tropics	variegated cherry tomato, thorny leaves, look in sale yards, abattoirs
# Vachellia karroo (May 2013 bulletin)	karroo thorn	South East Queensland, Fitzroy Basin, Desert Channels, Queensland Murray Darling Region, Condamine, South West Queensland	long, white, paired thorns

Class 1 declared plant

Regional Coordinator news

Thank you to all of our past and continuing regional coordinators for your valuable contributions to our network. We have 3 new Regional Coordinators coming on board for 2015:

Bundaberg Paul Garland from Biosecurity Queensland

Toowoomba Kym Campbell from Condamine Alliance and

Emerald Bernie Claussen from CHRRUP
(The Central Highlands Regional Resources Use Planning Cooperative).

Upcoming Weed Spotter training

Toowoomba, 10 am–12 pm Tuesday 17 March 2015.

Brisbane, 1 pm–3 pm Thursday 19 March 2015.

Please email Melinda.Laidlaw@dsitia.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 3896 9323 if you would like to attend.

Notifications – November 2014–January 2015

Finding and reporting emerging weeds which could cause serious environmental, social and economic impacts across Queensland is a critical role of our network. **Putting them on the map** also means we can track their spread and the effectiveness of control measures across the landscape and through time.

If you see a plant in your region which raises your suspicions, please [collect it](#) and bring it to the attention of your Regional Coordinator and/or the Queensland Herbarium. You can find a full list of the declared plants of Queensland on the [Biosecurity Queensland website](#). (**WONS**=Weed of National Significance; **NAQS**=Northern Australian Quarantine Survey; **NEAL**=National Environmental Alert List)

1. **Class 1 weed/WONS** [Asparagus asparagoides](#) (L.) Druce (bridal creeper) from Amiens via Stanthorpe. Peter Rouen via Craig Magnussen, Southern Downs Regional Council.
2. **Special watch** [Asystasia gangetica](#) (L.) T.Anderson subsp. [gangetica](#) (Chinese violet) from Boigu Island, Torres Strait. S.A. Cowan via Barbara Waterhouse, Commonwealth DAFF.
3. **Class 1 weed/WONS** [Opuntia](#) sp. (possibly *O. engelmannii* Salm-Dyck ex Engelm.) (prickly pear) from Windsor. Marie Vitelli, AgForce.
4. **Class 2 weed/WONS** [Opuntia monacantha](#) (Willd.) Haw. (prickly pear) from Wacol. Matt Ryan, Biosecurity Queensland.
5. **Class 1 weed/WONS** [Opuntia leucotricha](#) DC. (prickly pear) from Carrara. Di Webster, City of Gold Coast Council.
6. **Class 1 weed/WONS** [Opuntia microdasys](#) (Lehm.) Pfeiff. (bunny ears cactus) from Carrara. Di Webster, City of Gold Coast Council.
7. **Class 1 weed/WONS** [Opuntia rufida](#) (red bunny ears cactus) from Carrara. Di Webster, City of Gold Coast Council.
8. **Class 1 weed/NAQS** [Vachellia](#) sp. (possibly *V. gerrardii* (Benth.) P.J.H.Hurter (prickly acacia) from Townsville. Melissa Green, Townsville City Council.
9. **Class 1 weed/NEAL** [Vachellia karroo](#) (Hayne) Banfi & Galasso (karroo thorn) from Parkhurst, Rockhampton. Glen Gibbins via Madonna Hoffman, Biosecurity Queensland.



[Vachellia karroo](#) (karroo thorn) Class 1.
Photo: DAFF

Your Regional Coordinators

Regional Coordinators are your local weed experts and are able to answer your questions about training, specimen preparation and weed identification in your area. Give them a call!

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Weed Spotters' Network Queensland is a joint project between the Queensland Herbarium, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and local governments with funding support from the Land Protection Fund