

cng news

EDITION 7, SPRING 2007

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Then sign up for the National CNG e-Network!

To register visit:
<http://www.jta.com.au/mailman/listinfo/cngnetwork>

Or contact the National CNG Coordinator: Kelly Snell
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PO Box 103, Geelong, Victoria, 3220.
Phone (03) 5226 4625; Fax (03) 5226 4725; Email kelly.snell@dpi.vic.gov.au

from the Chair.....

drought ALERT!

on CNG this spring

The drought across most of the country has definitely had an effect on CNG plants over the past year or so and in some areas CNG plants are still depleted as we await rains.

These conditions have the potential to magnify the CNG problem across the country this spring. CNG will be the first to flourish after rains, dominating landscapes and causing large areas of paddocks to become unpalatable as it goes into seed.

Land managers need to be aware of the possibility that new infestations will occur due to the marked increase in transport of stock feed across the country during the drought.

If infestations go unnoticed or are not managed appropriately they will set large amounts of seed, making eradication a difficult task and management a long term prospect.

Monitoring for CNG this spring needs to be vigilant and I would urge everyone to get out there and have a good look around. Suspect plants need to be accurately identified and new infestations reported to local authorities.

If you require further information regarding identification or management of CNG please contact your local authority or the National CNG Coordinator.

Keith Hamilton

Chair National Chilean needle grass Taskforce

Supported by the State Government of Victoria





Enid Mayfield

Preventing CNG from invading native reserves within **THE GINNINDERRA CATCHMENT**

Ginninderra Catchment (below in yellow) takes in some 32,000 hectares of land the ACT and NSW. Ginninderra Creek is of major importance to the Catchment in both a local and regional context. It carries approximately one quarter of the urban water runoff from Canberra directly into the Murrumbidgee River system and then the Murray. The Catchment is managed by Ginninderra Catchment Group who are an incorporated umbrella group of community volunteers that strive to improve the health of the Catchment through effective engagement with government, agencies, business, schools and the catchment community.

weed. Significant efforts have since been made by the ACT Government through targeted spraying and mower hygiene to try and contain the spread of ALG throughout the Gungahlin area with the major aim of preventing CNG spreading into the world class grassland and grassy woodland reserves located in the Gungahlin area.

What is being done about CNG?

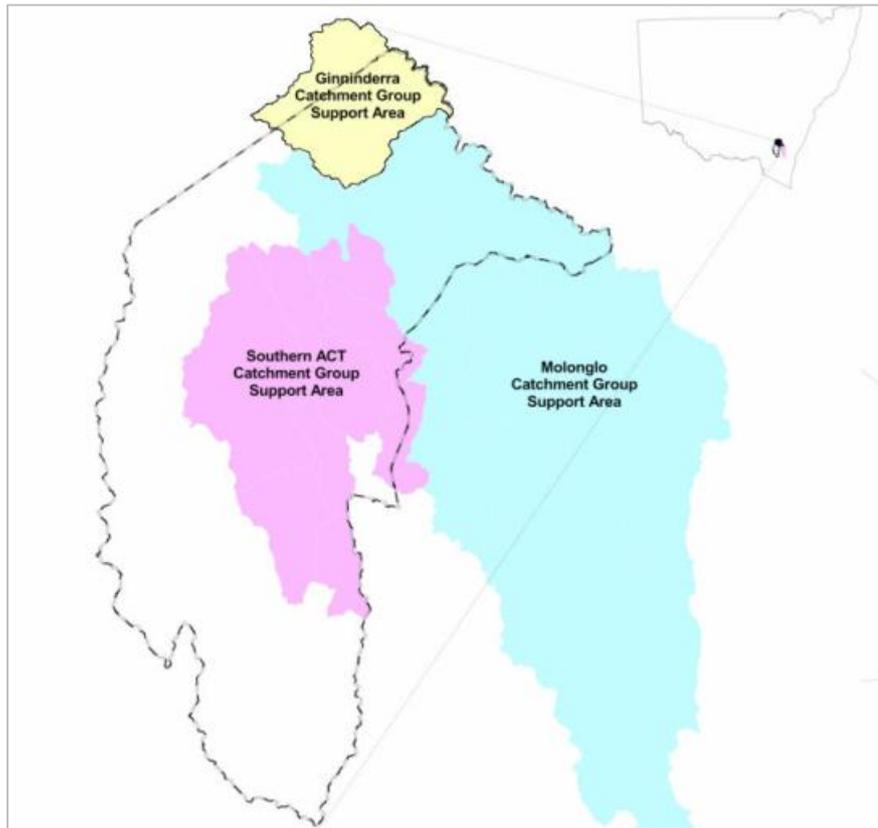
The Ginninderra Catchment Group has recently obtained funding to map the occurrence of CNG along major roads in Gungahlin, north of Canberra, and in the vicinity of woodland and grassland reserves such as Gorooyaroo, Mulligan's Flat, and the Gungahlin grassland reserves.

The aim of the project is to identify CNG infestations so later they can be removed using selective herbicides or, in the case of one or two plants, dug out.

The ACT Government will undertake most of this control work with smaller infestations being dug out by volunteers. This survey will provide a benchmark for CNG in the Gungahlin area and over the coming years it should be possible to monitor whether the CNG continues to expand its range and intensity, or is being contained or reduced.

Friends of Grasslands (FOG) are supporting the project in a number of ways, including encouraging volunteers to join Margaret Ning (a FOG member), who is employed by the project, to map the occurrence of CNG. This is not a straight forward task, as CNG is not

readily distinguished, except to trained eyes. This can be troublesome in situations where CNG plants are few in number. However, if not identified and removed at this early stage CNG can over time become dominant.



CNG in the Ginninderra Catchment

Chilean Needle Grass (CNG) has been firmly established in Canberra's older Northern suburbs for many years, however a survey carried out in 2000 by the then ACT Government Department of Wildlife Research and Monitoring found that Gungahlin was relatively free of the

>>>continued next page...



Enid Mayfield

CNG identification training in Canberra

Ginninderra Catchment from previous page ...

It is hoped the project will prevent CNG from spreading into grassland and grassy woodland reserves, whilst providing insights into the ecology of CNG and some causes of spread. It is well known that mowing is one vector in CNG's distribution within the Catchment.

The project will also record occurrences of African love grass, serrated tussock, St. John's wort and Paterson's curse in the Gungahlin area.



CNG in the Ginninderra Catchment. -Photo by Geoff Robertson

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing!

This is one occasion, where a little knowledge will be important in stopping the further spread of CNG and preventing its invasion of nature reserves. It is highly desirable for the project to have a number of individuals with the ability to spot CNG, report infestations, and remove them, especially when there only a few plants present.

Both the Group and FOG, along with their volunteers, are experienced at spotting and controlling CNG, and can provide tips for people in the area that wish to learn how to identify or control CNG. A brochure describing the impacts and dangers of CNG, ALG and ST as well as how to identify these weeds has been developed and will be distributed to key Gungahlin residents who live in close proximity to the nature reserves, hopefully encouraging the reserve neighbours to play a part in their continued protection and preservation.

Contact the Ginninderra Catchment Group for further information on, (02) 6278 3309 or e-mail, landcare@ginninderralandcare.org.au.

By Geoff Robertson (Friend Of Grasslands) and Shelley Cooper (Ginninderra Catchment Group).

Jenny Conolly, Pest and Weeds Officer, from Parks, Conservation and Lands recently conducted an identification training session on Chilean Needle Grass and other Declared Pest Plants for Parkcare and Landcare volunteers in the ACT.

"CNG plants are easily identified around Canberra now as the leaves take on a 'strawing' or 'yellowing' colour" (Jenny Conolly)

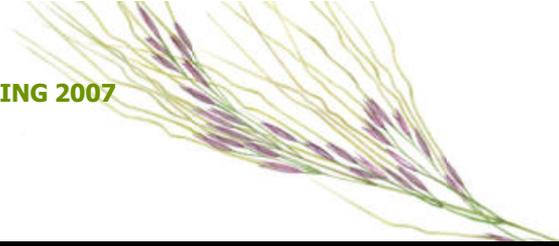
The program ran for around 3 hours to allow approximately 35 participants adequate time to identify and become familiar with Chilean needle grass, interact with the presenters and other participants.

Activities included practical identification of Chilean needle grass, differentiating between Chilean needle grass and native stipa and exotic species. Potted weed stock were used as an initial identification tool.

Other activities focussed on practical control methods and rehabilitation techniques. Information was also provided on treatment methods for both woody and grass weeds.

A walk through the fire affected Stromlo Forest enabled the Volunteers to see these plants in the field (photo below, Jenny Conolly).





Community Group Feature:

DHURRINGILE & DISTRICT LANDCARE GROUP



Dhurringile, meaning crouching emu, is between the Goulburn River and Waranga Basin in the Goulburn Broken Catchment in northern Victoria. Home to some of the first irrigated agriculture in the state, the district is the meeting place of box woodlands, ironbark forests and river red gum floodplains.

Background

The Dhurringile and District Landcare group has been active since 1996 with activities in the past few years focusing on weeds, education and the planting of a wildlife corridor between the Goulburn River and the Waranga Basin. Chilean needle grass was first identified in the district following a seed collecting workshop in 2004.

How are they tackling the problem?

As the Goulburn river forms the eastern boundary of the district the Group were keen to limit spread of CNG along the river and within its forest reserves. Funding was sought from the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA), to conduct a survey and awareness campaign that was carried out during the spring of 2005. The Landcare group were able to map most of the CNG and hire a contractor to spray priority areas during the latter part of spring.



John Laing with a CNG plant that when removed had 5000 seeds counted on it.

At the same time the Group were grappling with the scale of the problem, their local government, City of Greater Shepparton, was working with another Landcare group on CNG. A partnership was formed, meetings were held, and workshops were organised by the GBCMA to bring together Landcare groups, Local Government, VicRoads, researchers and State government departments. The workshops enabled all stakeholders to improve their

knowledge and skills to tackle the CNG problem.

What are the plans for this year?

The drought bit hard during 2006 with the planned major spraying and awareness campaigns put on hold as there was little growth of CNG. The few patches of that did appear were spot sprayed on a "there's some lets get it" basis during the spring of 2006.

Winter rains were reasonable this year and CNG is expected to take off. November is the time of year when CNG is most visible in this part of the country and the Group is gearing up to start another awareness campaign and spraying program.

A majority of CNG found during the past two years has been on roadsides, with slashing the likely contributor to this spread. Local Governments have recognized this problem and are working on alternative management practices.



Surveying the district for CNG

There has been little increase of CNG on private land, although there are still many landowners in the district unaware of the presence of CNG and its impacts. Raising this awareness is a high priority for the Group.

By John Laing –President Dhurringile and District Landcare Group



LATEST RESEARCH and NEW PROJECTS

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE PhD COMPLETE!

A three-year PhD titled "Grazing for the long term utilisation and control of Chilean needle grass (Nassella neesiana)" is now complete!

Submitted in February this year by Charles Grech (Victorian Department of Primary Industries, Weed Sciences) to the University of New England, the study was supported by the Australian Governments Natural Heritage Trust and Cooperative Research Centre for Australian Weed Management (Weeds CRC).

Both glasshouse and field trials were conducted to look at feed evaluation, response to soil changes and best practice management. Field trials were completed in four different geographical regions across both New South Wales and Victoria and contrasted areas dominated by both summer and winter rainfall.

Key findings included:

- CNG can be utilised by grazing stock when it is vegetative during the cooler winter months, but its palatability is below that of cocksfoot.
- Conventional cropping in Northern NSW region was successful in reducing CNG infestations.



Strategic grazing at the Greenvale site. (Photo Charles Grech).

- Set stocking and flupropanate leads to more bare ground and increased CNG cover.
- Once CNG becomes reproductive, stock avoid eating it, even at stocking rates of 300DSE/ha.
- Cattle are less likely to be contaminated by panicle seed than sheep when grazing CNG.
- Rotational (strategic) grazing has a limited window of opportunity to reduce standing panicle seed.

Some of the trial sites will continue to be monitored over the next two years to enhance knowledge of long-term management effects.



Sheep were much more easily contaminated with CNG seed than cattle (Photo Charles Grech).

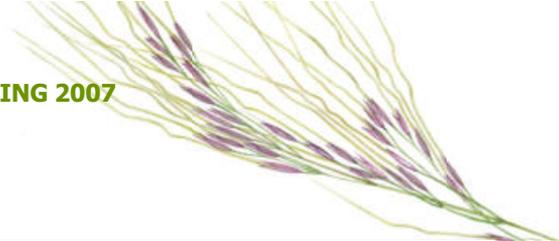
The findings are being compiled into a series of Agriculture Notes that will be available soon. The series will include:

- managing seed production by slashing
- maintaining feed value by mowing and fertiliser application
- grazing management and stock class
- soil fertility management
- integrating herbicide wipers.

Information is also now being incorporated into the National CNG Best Practice Management Guide due for completion in October 2007.

For copies of the Ag Notes, or further information on the PhD please contact charles.grech@dpi.vic.gov.au

For a copy of the Best Practice Guide please contact Kelly Snell, the National CNG Coordinator (details on front page).



LATEST RESEARCH and NEW PROJECTS Continued....

NEW PhD PROJECT to correlate weeds in paddocks to weeds in hay

A joint project between the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (Weed Sciences) and The University of Ballarat began earlier this year to investigate the correlation between weeds in paddocks and weeds in hay.

Chilean needle grass is one of the initial target weeds for investigation which aims to develop a reliable technique to determine the likely weed seed contamination of hay from a property with a known standing weed infestation. Trials will be developed that quantify the amount of weed seed baled during fodder harvesting from a known weed infestation density.

Techniques for reducing weed seed production during future cropping seasons, the amount of weed seed dispersed during the transportation of hay bales, the effect of silage on seed viability and the contamination of harvesting equipment will also be investigated.

This will be a proof of concept project that will hopefully provide information enabling authorities to restrict fodder movement from properties harvesting hay from known weed infested paddocks and limit weed seed spread.

The project will be undertaken by Kate Gosney (PhD student, pictured below) with supervision by Dr. S. K. Florentine, Dr Graeme Ambrose (University of Ballarat) and Dr David McLaren and Charles Grech (Vic DPI). The project is supported by the Victorian State Governments Tackling Weeds on Private Land initiative, Australian Post-graduate Award Industry and the University of Ballarat.



For further information contact:

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By Kate Gosney,
University of Ballarat

DWM SUCCESS! New CNG Projects Underway

Two Chilean needle grass projects have been announced successful in the latest round of Defeating the Weeds Menace. Announced on 22nd August by Minister for Conservation, Senator Eric Abetz, the two successful Chilean needle grass projects are:

Eradication of CNG from Tasmania

This project will survey and control Tasmania's only known, recently discovered, infestations of Chilean needle grass. The project will also survey and control outlying populations of serrated tussock.

The project will prevent the spread of these grasses into uninfested areas of international conservation significance and fine wool production areas worth millions of dollars to the national economy.

The project will allow local and state government, community groups, industry and individuals to work cooperatively to control and eradicate CNG, and create the basis for on-going and self-sustaining management.

Removal of CNG from roadsides using wick wiping

This project aims to find just how effectively wick-wiping controls Chilean needle grass along roadsides. The method has had some success and will now be tested more widely to develop recommended procedures, coordinated to meet with realistic timelines and budgets of roadside managers such as shires and road authorities.

The project will set up replicated trials across a range of vegetation types, climatic conditions and soils across south-eastern Australia, and test variations of the successful pilot methods. Project partners will be roadside managers, contributing mowing and wick-wiping equipment. Trials will be tied in with existing roadside vegetation management strategies. Recommended procedures

Recommended procedures will provide for effective control and reversal across large areas for CNG on sites of most rapid spread (roadsides).





UPCOMING EVENTS

WEEDBUSTER WEEK 2007

Weedbuster Week is nearly here again. From 6th – 13th of October, this national event aims to raise awareness about weeds through increased public involvement in weed management, education and awareness projects.



Many community groups and local government agencies are organising events across the State building on the success of last years' activities.

Under the slogan "**Grow Me Instead**", this years Weedbuster focus weeds are garden plants that can become weeds in our environment and encouraging the use of suitable native plants that can be used instead. This is to raise awareness of the fact the over 60% of declared weeds in Australia are Garden Escapees and that even suburban garden plants can cause issues in our Environment.

There are events and activities being held in cities and regions across Australia. Feel free to attend any of the events that may be happening in your area during the week or even organise your own. More information can be found at the Weedbusters website.

The work that our Volunteer Weedbusters do is invaluable in keeping our environment safe.

If you wish to register an event or want further information please contact your [State Weedbuster Coordinator](#) for visit www.weedbusters.info

2007

9th International Conference on the Ecology and Management of Alien Plant Invasions (EMAPi9): 17th – 21st September 2007

To be held at the Hyatt Regency Perth, Western Australia,

lia, the conference will cover topics such as ecological, biological and biogeographical studies on invasive plants; management of plant invasions, prevention of new incursions and management of existing infestations; appropriate legislation, public education and information. For further information visit <http://www.congresswest.com.au/emapi9/index.html> or [Register Now](#).

14th Biennial NSW Weeds Conference: 25th – 27th September 2007

The Conference will be held at the University of Wollongong, with the theme 'Weeds, people and partnerships'. Some of the topics to be considered will include: working with the community; new and emerging weed threats; new advances in weed technology; and regional case studies. Register electronically on www.weeds2007.com.au.

Third Biennial Victorian Weed Conference: 3rd – 4th October 2007

The Weed Society of Victoria will hold its Third Biennial Weed Conference – *Earth, fire, water and wind, their effects on weeds* on Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 4th October 2007. For further information visit <http://www.wsvic.org.au/>.

5th National Native Grasses Conference: 7th – 10th October, 2007.

The Fifth National Native Grasses Conference "Native Grasses for a Thirsty Landscape", is being held in Mudgee, NSW and hosted by Stipa Native Grasses Association with assistance from the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and the Central West Catchment Management Authority (CMA). To register or for further information visit <http://www.stipa.com.au/events.htm>

2008

16th Australian Weeds Conference: 18th – 22nd May 2008

The Conference will be held at the Cairns Convention Centre, with the theme 'Weed Management 2008: Hot topics in the tropics'. The conference will showcase recent advances in weed science, extension and policy across Australian and International communities and landscapes. For information visit www.16awc.com.au.

