

The Bridal Creeper



newsletter of the national asparagus weeds management committee

December 2005 vol 1 no.3

contents

national workshop.....page 1
C Kleinjans presentation..pg 3
bridal veil.....page 4
committee news.....page 4



contact details

Dennis Gannaway
Asparagus management coordinator.
tel. (08) 8303 9748
email gannaway.dennis@saugov.sa.gov.au

the fine print disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the National Asparagus Weeds Management Committee nor those of any of the funding bodies associated with the Committee.

Advice offered in the newsletter is of a general nature and should not be exclusively used in any decision making process.

newsletter funded by :-



Natural Heritage Trust
Helping Communities Helping Australia

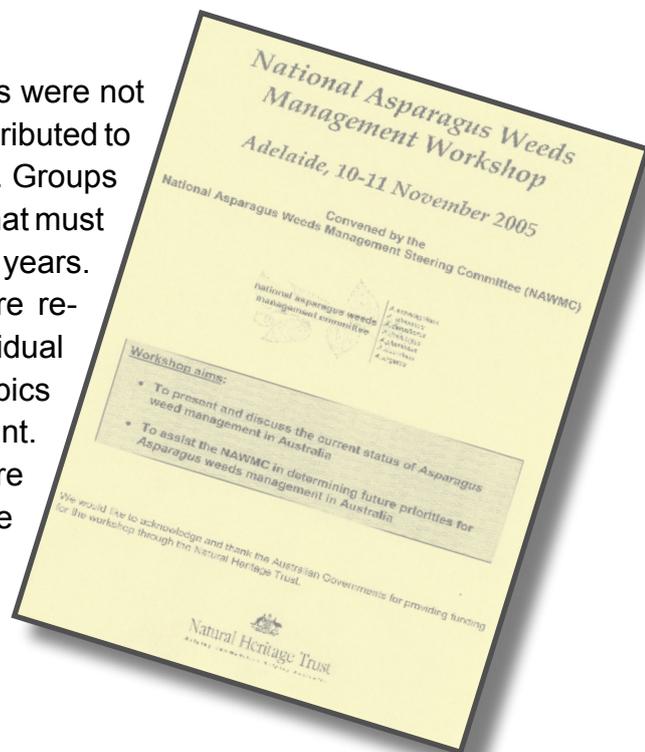


Government of South Australia
Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation

National workshop a success

The inaugural national *Asparagus* weeds workshop focusing on the current status of management in Australia was held in Adelaide in early November. Sixty participants representing all affected Australian states and a visitor from New Zealand listened to fourteen papers on topics as diverse as predictive modelling, successes in biocontrol distribution and on ground eradication undertaken on offshore islands. After all the talking on day one we piled onto a bus and toured the Fleurieu Peninsula, to the South of Adelaide, to see the weeds in the field and observe some of the control work being done.

The workshop participants were not only talked to but also contributed to future planning directions. Groups were formed to discuss what must be done in the next three years. The ideas generated were recorded and each individual then voted on the three topics they saw as most important. These discussions were broken into two parts, the first focused exclusively on bridal creeper and the second on all other *Asparagus* weeds.



So what were the top six hot topics?

for **bridal creeper**

1. Support for ongoing works following weed removal - revegetation and restoration.
2. Centralised mapping available to all stake holders.
3. Inclusion of bridal creeper into all Natural Resource Management (NRM) regional strategies and plans.
4. Fire management and ecology research.
5. Community awareness campaign.
6. Generic off label permit for herbicide use.

continued on page two

and for the **other *Asparagus*** weeds

1. Aim to eradicate the Western Cape form of bridal creeper.
2. Develop a best practice guide giving effective herbicide options and research.
3. Legally restrict sale and movement of *Asparagus sp.* especially those with limited current distribution.
4. Use existing modelling and information to determine priority weeds and perform weed risk assessment.
5. Investigate biocontrol feasibility and identify targets for biocontrols.
6. Get funding clarity for each species - are they eligible for Federal and or regional funding.

The priorities identified will be used to focus the work of the National Asparagus Weeds Management Committee (NAWMC) and that of the National Coordinator. This will be achieved by linking the priorities with the objectives set out in the National Bridal Creeper Strategy. It's worth mentioning that the National Bridal Creeper Strategy is not limited to bridal creeper. Objective 2.2.5 states that we should "Contain other, newly emerging *Asparagus* weeds".

The workshop proceeding, including relevant papers submitted but not presented will be published in an edition of the *Plant Protection Quarterly* early next year. Please check the bridal creeper web page (<http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/bridalcreeper/>) in late January 2006 for more details.

photo gallery



Fig1: Talk on bridal veil herbicide trials.



Fig 2: Less talk more action - digging up bridal veil tuber mats.

all photos by Dennis Gannaway : DWLBC



Fig 4: Volunteers from Friends of Aldinga Scrub talking on their bridal creeper management efforts.

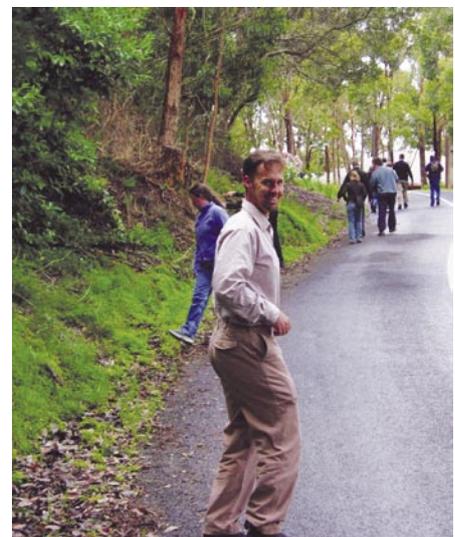


Fig 3: A happy John Virtue on a road-side infested with *A. scandens*

Asparagus weeds from a South African perspective.

The keynote speaker at the workshop was Carien Kleinjan from the Biological Control of Weeds Unit, University of Cape Town South Africa. Carien gained extensive experience in the natural enemies of the *Asparagus* species while undertaking surveys for the CSIRO in the late 1990's. The task then was to find the three biocontrols agents we now use for bridal creeper management in Australia.

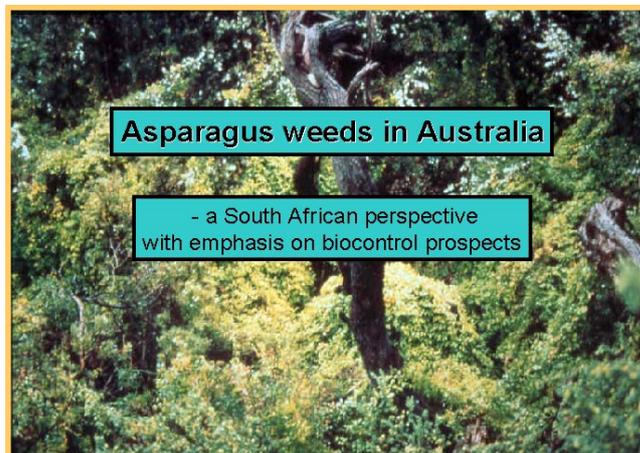


Fig 5: Opening slide from Carien's presentation

Carien's address began with an overview of the history of the biocontrol research before moving on to showing the natural distribution of both the common and the Western Cape form of bridal creeper (*A. asparagoides*) within South Africa. Of most interest was the display of *Asparagus* species that grow within Southern Africa that are mistaken for bridal creeper, a reminder that we must stay vigilant to prevent other *Asparagus* weeds from being imported into Australia.

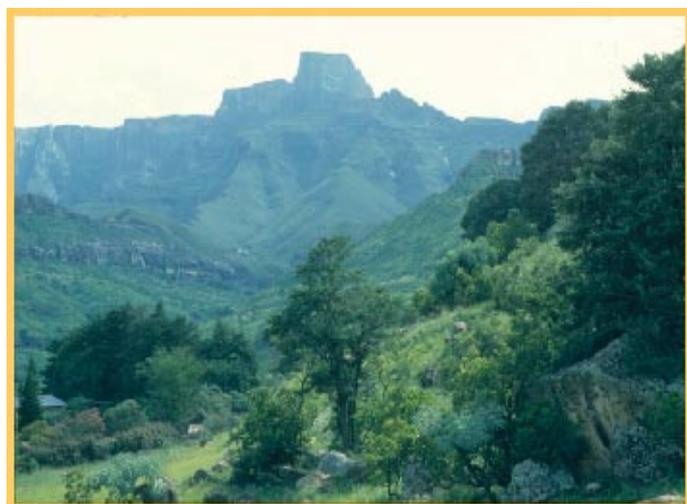


Fig 6: Bridal creepers home range - The Drakensberg Mountains in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa.
Photo : Carien Kleinjan

The presentation then moved to the subject of the variety insects and fungi that predate on the various *Asparagus* species. A topic that deserves more investigation is the area of the insects that attack Ground *Asparagus* (*A.densiflorous* or *A.ethiopicus*), particularly the beetle larvae that targets the plants tubers see fig. 8. This news may be of interest to the land managers in the coastal areas of New South Wales where Ground *Asparagus* is emerging as a real threat to biodiversity.

Climbing *Asparagus* (*A.scandens*) was identified by Carien as a problem plant within South Africa. With its natural range restricted by mountains, the plant has escaped from gardens within the city of Cape Town and has invaded remnant bush land.

The full presentation is available in a Powerpoint file from the National Coordinator. This can be emailed or a CD copy posted to you. Carien's paper will be published in full in the *Plant Protection Quarterly*.

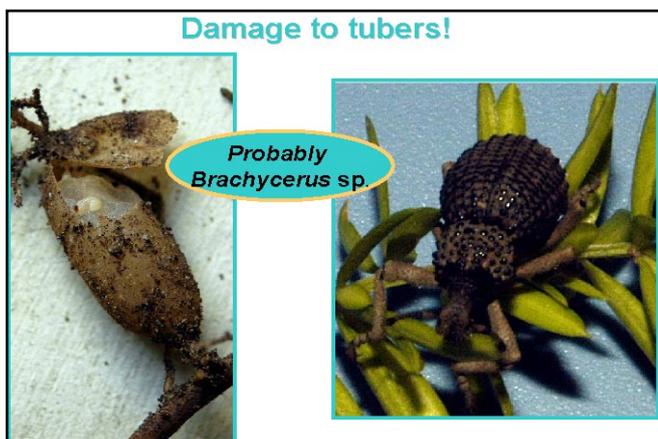


Fig 8: Perhaps a new biocontrol agents?



Fig 7: Carien getting to know some other South Africans in the Australian bush (Bridal veil).
Photo Dennis Gannaway DWLBC

Bridal veil under the spot light

Bridal veil (*Asparagus declinatus*) has been described as potentially becoming the next “bridal creeper” if control measures are not undertaken very soon. The weed



Fig 9: Bridal veil root mass

impacts on remnant native vegetation within the Adelaide Hills, the southern coastal region of the Fleurieu Peninsula, Kangaroo island, Yorke Peninsula and in Western Australia. Unfortunately the list goes on.

Bridal veil shares many of the characteristics of bridal creeper. It produces seed laden fruit which



Fig 10: Cladode and fruit of bridal veil

are happily eaten and dispersed by birds, foxes and rabbits. The underground tuber mat becomes an impenetrable mass restricting recruitment of

native flora and it has the ability to smother out under storey vegetation.

At present there is no biological control agents in Australia. Herbicides and digging out of the rhizome remain the only real control methods.

A management information sharing group has been formed to try and identify best practice control methods. For more details contact Susan Lawrie at susan.lawrie@flinders.edu.au



Fig 11: Bridal veil in natural vegetation

Community gets a voice on committee

The National Asparagus Weeds Management Committee (NAWMC), the body overseeing the implementation of the National Bridal Creeper Strategy, has expanded to include members from the community. In the past the committee was made up exclusively of State agencies and CSIRO representatives.

The new members are :-

Sue Longmore from Victoria and **Greg Stewart** from Tasmania. In addition, the committee has received a nomination from a South Australian community member who is yet to be ratified.

The committee is, however, still without a chair. We are currently looking for a person who has some experience with the workings of government, a keen interest in environmental issues and experience in steering a committee. If you know of anybody who fits this description, please contact the National Coordinator. Contact details can be found on page one.

One of the founding members of the committee, Kathryn Batchelor, has taken an extended break from killing *Asparagus* to concentrate on raising a family. Thank you, Kathryn, for the time and effort you have put into the running of the committee. We look forward to having you back on board in a year or two.



All that's left is to wish everybody a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.