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Inside this issue:

National Blackberry Taskforce Visits WA	1
New Strains of Blackberry Rust Released	2
MWAG targets different blackberry species for control	3
Demand Grows For More Blackberry Species Identification	3
Victorian Blackberry Taskforce Extends Weed Model	5
Funding Opportunities	6

National Blackberry Taskforce Visits WA

The National Blackberry Taskforce (NBT) visited WA recently to evaluate its blackberry problem, and formulate strategies for future national action. NBT members were joined by representatives from NRM bodies interested in Blackberry.

In Western Australia, blackberry is regarded as one of the most serious environmental weeds infesting many of the creeks and plantations on the Darling Scarp, east of Perth and other high rainfall areas.

The group toured the CSIRO Quarantine facility and biocontrol program in Perth, visited an American blackberry site, blackberry in pine plantations near Dwellingup, a biocontrol experimental site near Manjimup, and saw firsthand the impacts of blackberry on riparian habitats along the Warren River near Pemberton.

During the tour some important issues for blackberry research and control were highlighted, such as the successful community mapping of all 3 Blackberry species in WA, the revelation that some Blackberry taxa appear immune to the rust, the importance of differentiating species in trialling the new rust strains and the complex issue of the spread & management of blackberry in pine plantations and adjoining forests.

Recommendations for future action to come out of the tour include the importance of blackberry species mapping in all States and identifying blackberry species within the national biocontrol rust program. Also highlighted was the need for further work on the impact of blackberry on biodiversity and more solutions to the problems of blackberry infestations in pine plantations. "The NBT will explore ways that the WA community can continue the outstanding work that has already been achieved in Blackberry control" said NBT Chair Alex Arbuthnot.

Continued on Page 2



Photo: Penny Richards
From left to right ; John Moore , Dr. John Scott (CSIRO – Perth) and Alex Arbuthnot (Chair of the NBT) inspect the CSIRO biological control trial site near Manjimup.

Contributions to this newsletter are welcome! We would love to hear of any Blackberry projects and success stories especially those implementing actions in the National Blackberry Strategy (2001) Please contact: Penny Richards Penny.Richards@dpi.vic.gov.au





National Blackberry Taskforce Visits WA

For further information on the National Blackberry Task Force visit to WA see page 11 of weedwatch- Newsletter of the Cooperative Research Centre for Australian Weed Management Volume 2 , No.14 March 2007, visit:

http://www.weeds.crc.org.au/documents/weed_watch_vol2_no14.pdf

For further information on Blackberry in WA see:

http://www.ento.csiro.au/weeds/blackberry/WABBManPlan2006_draft.pdf

Or contact John Moore DAF on (08) 9892 8444 or Email: JMoore@agric.wa.gov.au



Photo: Penny Richards
A demonstration of the 'Spraying Mantis' for applying herbicide in difficult situations highlighted the need for inventions and innovation in Blackberry control.

New Strains of Blackberry Rust Released

As part of the CSIRO project '*National blackberry biological control program in partnership with the community*' funded through the Defeating the Weed Menace (DTWM) program three field days were performed in Spring 2006 in NSW, WA and SA. Stakeholders were informed of the national release program of additional strains of the blackberry leaf-rust and techniques for them to make their own releases were demonstrated. The field day at the Nungatta Station near Bombala in NSW was performed in conjunction with the GRILCO blackberry project, also funded by DTWM. It was attended by more than 75 people. The field days in SA and WA were attended by about 40 and 15 people, respectively.

The SA field day, held in the Adelaide Hills was coordinated by Phil Crammond from the Adelaide and Mount Lofty NRM board and information delivered by John Lester from CSIRO. The field day attracted weeds officers, local council workers, State agency representatives, researchers from Flinders University and interested community members. John treated the group to a demonstration of the release technique before everybody headed into the surrounding blackberry infestation to get some first hand experience in setting the rust free. Weather conditions on the day were perfect— cold and wet.

Rust release kits were given to weed officers working within the Mount Lofty Ranges to infect blackberries within their region. It will be interesting to see whether the strains have established and survived a very hot and dry summer.

For further information visit:

<http://www.ento.csiro.au/weeds/blackberry/index.html>



Photo : Dennis Gannaway, SA WoNS Management Coordinator
John Lester from the CSIRO releasing rust in the Adelaide Hills South Australia while community members look on.



Paul Yeoh (CSIRO- Perth) demonstrating the community rust release kits to a community group in Bridgetown SW WA.



The Manjimup Weed Action Group (MWAG) targets different blackberry species for control

The **Manjimup Weed Action Group** was formed in 1998 and covers an area of 13,112ha in the Manjimup Shire in the South West of Western Australia. The group is comprised of Landcare members, technical flora specialists and representatives from the Shire of Manjimup, Department of Environment and Conservation and Department of Agriculture and Food.

The group meets monthly to discuss and coordinate integrated weed management activities such as weed identification, best management practices, displays and educational activities and prioritisation of weed control.

During the summer of 2004/5 MWAG and its agency networks, in partnership with CSIRO undertook a statewide blackberry collection from which a blackberry species list and distribution map was compiled.

Southern Forests Landcare (MWAG member) has been working with CSIRO on trials using the Blackberry rust as a biological control for *Rubus anglocandicans* (named locally as common blackberry). Another prevalent Blackberry species named locally as small leaf blackberry (*Rubus ulmifolius*) appears to be less affected by the rust and there are concerns that this blackberry species may replace common blackberry if the rust is effective.

MWAG has recently focused on more blackberry species mapping in the Warren River catchment and is implementing a strategic coordinated control works program for small leaf blackberry with the aim of eradicating it from areas where it could replace the common blackberry *Rubus anglocandicans*. Four outlier areas of small leaf blackberry are targeted for eradication and have been successfully controlled using chemicals.

Continued detailed mapping of all Blackberry species will enable strategic long term containment strategies to be devised for certain Blackberry species within the Manjimup Shire and surrounding areas.

For further information contact:

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Lee Fontanini, MWAG, MANJIMUP WA

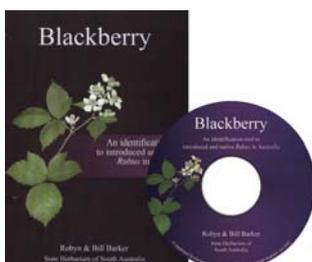
Phone: (08) 9771 7958

Email: Lee.Fontanini@dec.wa.gov.au



Photo: Paul Yeoh
Lee Fontanini of MWAG showing NBT members a site where *Rubus ulmifolius* is being eradicated in Manjimup WA

Demand Grows For More Blackberry Species Identification Workshops



With the release of the interactive CD-ROM '*Blackberry an identification tool in Australia*' there is a growing demand for workshops to train people in the identification of the 23 introduced and 11 native blackberry species in Australia" says Alex Arbuthnot, Chair of the National Blackberry Taskforce.

Continued on Page 4



Demand Grows For More Blackberry Species Identification Workshops

The CRC for Australian Weed Management successfully ran 5 pilot Blackberry species Identification workshops in NSW in 2005. Since then workshops have been run in other states.

Blackberry in Australia comprises a number of closely related plants that are often dealt with under the *Rubus fruticosus* aggregate. At least 23 species of blackberry from Europe, America and Asia have become naturalised in Australia. The effectiveness of management techniques, including biological control and herbicide application is known to vary among different blackberry species.

Best-practice management of blackberry is dependent on matching the optimal control methods for certain blackberry species. For instance matching virulent rust strains to the most susceptible blackberry species is essential for successful biological control. Native *Rubus* species must be distinguished from exotic species to prevent their unnecessary removal.

Last year, Bill, Robyn and Jenny Barker ran a series of Blackberry species identification workshops from the State Herbarium in South Australia. Bill and Robyn are the authors of the Blackberry Species Identification CDROM and are South Australia's leading authorities on blackberries.

Facilitated by the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation the workshops were run to ensure that new blackberry rust releases were made on the appropriate blackberry species.

The Victorian Blackberry Taskforce (VBT) and the CRC for Australian Weed Management ran two successful workshops in North East Victoria last year. They were well attended by Government agency staff, Landcare representatives, industry representatives, weed spraying contractors and members of the general community. Robin Adair, Leader of Weed Sciences for the Department of Primary Industries in Victoria found it extremely worthwhile. "The training in the use of the Lucid key vastly improved my ability to identify the different Blackberry species and improved my knowledge of blackberry issues. The workshops will greatly contribute to empowering the community to take further action on blackberry control" he said.

**At least 23 species
of blackberry from
Europe, America
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in Australia**

The workshops introduce participants to the use of the CD-ROM in identifying blackberry species and explain why correct blackberry species identification is important for the most effective control programs. Participants work with fresh and preserved blackberry samples using the CD-ROM identification tool to distinguish features and taxa.

They also learn the requirements for submitting samples to herbaria for formal identification and the correct application of chemicals for effective blackberry control.

"Overall the workshops will increase the capacity of weed professionals and community members to identify blackberry species in their area so they can better target effective blackberry control", says Alex Arbutnot. "In the future, they will also lead to better mapping of the different blackberry species" he said.

Continued on Page 5



Demand Grows For More Blackberry Species Identification Workshops

Expressions of Interest are now being sought for groups interested in holding workshops over the 2007/08 summer months when Blackberry is in flower. For an expression of interest form contact: Annette Beer, Education Officer, Weeds CRC, Email: annette.beer@dpi.nsw.gov.au, Ph: (02) 6938 1671 or

Penny Richards, Weeds of National Significance (WoNS), National Blackberry Coordinator, Ph: (03) 9785 0135, E-mail: Penny.Richards@dpi.vic.gov.au

The Blackberry identification tool to introduced and native *Rubus* in Australia CD Rom by Robyn and Bill Barker, State Herbarium of South Australia can be purchased from the University of Queensland website: www.cbit.uq.edu.au/software/blackberry/

A series of fact sheets are available on the Weeds CRC website:

http://www.weeds.crc.org.au/publications/factsheets_guidelines.html under integrated weed management.



Photo: Annette Beer

Participants, Reece Luxton and Bill Jordan, identifying blackberry using the CD-ROM identification tool.

Victorian Blackberry Taskforce Extends Weed Model

The Victorian Blackberry Taskforce (VBT) is expanding the Community Weed Model for the management of blackberry infestations in Victoria. The VBT is supported by the Department of Primary Industries Victoria (DPI - VIC)

VBT Chairperson Lyn Coulston and Executive Officer Andy Wernert of DPI VIC at Tallangatta visited Gippsland to promote the Community Weed Model concept.

With the assistance of funding made available by former Minister for Agriculture Bob Cameron, the VBT has identified two new community group projects.

The first is the Bass Coast Landcare Network, which will implement a blackberry management project with private landholders and relevant stakeholders in Three Creeks in South Gippsland.

The South Gippsland Landcare Network will also commence a Community Weed Model project for blackberry in areas near Korumburra and Foster. Further opportunities to promote the program have also taken place within the Lake Wellington Landcare Network.

For further information see :

<http://vicblackberrytaskforce.com.au/>

Or contact: Andy Wernert Department of Primary industries Tallangatta VIC Email: Andy.Wernert@dpi.vic.gov.au



Photo: DPI Vic

The Bass Coast Landcare Network launch a Community Weed Model blackberry project with the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce at Kilcunda in Victoria.



Funding Opportunities

Threatened Species Network* Community Grants

Close 5pm Friday 1 June 2007

Community groups are invited to apply for up to \$50,000 to conduct on-ground conservation work for the ongoing health of our natural environment, specifically targeting the needs of nationally threatened species and ecological communities. Funding is available for activities such as habitat restoration, weeding, feral animal control, population surveys and monitoring, fencing, and fire management.

Weeds of National Significance (WoNS)
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Project ideas must be discussed with the TSN Coordinator for your region prior to submitting an application. For more information go to www.wwf.org.au/tsn

*The Threatened Species Network is a community-based program of the Australian Government and WWF-Australia.

Round 3 of Community Water Grants

Applications close on 4 July 2007

The Australian Government's Community Water Grants programme offers grants to help local community organisations save, recycle or improve the health of their local water resources. Grants are available for projects related to: water saving and efficiency, water recycling and water treatment - improving surface and groundwater health. Types of projects in this category may include (but are not limited to): Erosion control, Stormwater and runoff treatment, Cleaning up a waterway, creek or wetland, Creek Rehabilitation, Reducing pollution in rivers, groundwater or coastal areas.

Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for projects that involve the community and have clear public benefits. Community Water Grants applications are submitted online. You must register online as an applicant before 22 June to apply. Applications close 11am EST, 4 July 2007.

Application forms and guidelines are available from: www.australia.gov.au/communitywatergrants or by phoning 1800 780 730

EVENTS:

June 07

Thursday 28th

National Blackberry Taskforce meeting in Albury NSW

Friday 29th

Blackberry field tour hosted by the North-East Vic Blackberry Action Group