



W Weedscene

Volume 17 Issue 1

Newsletter of the Weed Society of Victoria Inc.

January 2006

ACN: A0011723W ABN: 15 496 325 152 Print Post Approved – Publication Number 310279/00029

Interactions Between Weeds and Animals

A seminar presented by the Weed Society of Victoria Inc.

Thursday 9th March 2006

At the Lecture Theatre, Department of Primary Industries, Knoxfield Centre, 621 Burwood Highway, Knoxfield.

The complex ecological interactions of animals with weeds have major implications for agriculture and the environment. Weeds may be eaten, dispersed and pollinated by animals. Animals use weeds for shelter and nesting, and the activities of livestock and feral animals can create the conditions in which particular weeds thrive.

Relationships between weeds and animals can be detrimental or beneficial. Poisoning of livestock resulting from weed consumption is a recurring problem, but many weeds are useful fodder plants or can be exploited and controlled by strategic grazing. Weeds are hosts for many insects which are pests of useful plants, but insects are also the main organisms used in weed biological control programs. Seed-eating animals are blamed for the spread of some of our most serious weeds while there are concerns that the introduction of exotic pollinating insects will enhance the seeding, and thus spread, of many weedy plants.

This seminar examines a number of topical aspects of weed-animal interactions. If you are interested in such matters come and find out more.

The morning program will include **Tim Low**, Environmental Consultant, Brisbane, speaking on the 'Jeckyll and Hyde' plants. **Gabrielle Vivian-Smith**, Alan Fletcher Research Station, Brisbane, will speak on managing plant invasions; weed/bird interactions. **Lincoln Kern**, Practical Ecology P/L, Melbourne will look at possible lessons for action and education resulting from observations of weed/animal interactions. Interactions between the large earth bumble bee, *Bombus terrestris*, and sleeper weeds will be

discussed by **Guy Williams**, Macquarie University, Sydney. **Robin Adair**, DPI, Frankston will explore the potential for controlling Australian native weeds outside their natural range with cecidomyiid and pteromalid insects.

After lunch **Rex Stanton**, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga will examine the viability of weed seeds fed through the gut of sheep and cattle. Weeds and livestock poisoning will be explored by **Russell Graydon**, DPI Attwood and the program will conclude with a discussion on how rabbits, foxes and pigs impact on weeds by **Steve McPhee** and **Tim Bloomfield**, DPI, Melbourne. See enclosed flyer for details or contact the secretary Ros Shepherd on secwssv@surf.net.au or Ph/Fax 03 9576 2949.

The program will commence 8.55 am following registration which will open at 8.00 am and will finish at 4.00 pm. Lunch is expected to be from 1.00–2.00 pm. The 40th Annual General Meeting of the Weed Society of Victoria will follow this seminar at 4.00 pm.

The 40th Annual General Meeting of the WSV

Thursday 9th March 2006, 4.00 pm

At the Lecture Theatre, Department of Primary Industries, Knoxfield Centre, 621 Burwood Highway, Knoxfield.

The 40th AGM of the Weed Society of Victoria will follow the seminar 'Interactions Between Weeds and Animals'. If you wish to have an impact on the directions of the Society then nominate for a position on the committee, using the enclosed Nomination Form. All positions fall vacant at this year's AGM. New committee members bring new ideas to the committee and help to keep the Society focused on new and emerging issues in weed management. So, if you are passionate about weeds and their effect on our environment, be involved – come and have your say.

From the International Weed Science Society

The International Weed Science Society website is now hosted by University of California at Davis and maintained up to date by our Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Albert Fischer. Please make sure you update your link. The new address is <http://www.plantsciences.ucdavis.edu/iws/>. There you will find useful information including our new service of secure on-line credit card payment of membership dues.

This has been a good year in terms of weed science, international activities with several of our sister societies holding their main conferences and congresses. WSSA had their annual meeting in Hawaii, the European Weed Research Society (EWRS) had their 13th Symposium in Bari, Italy, the Asian Pacific Weed Science Society (APWSS) Conference was in Vietnam and the Latin American Weed Science Society (ALAM) Congress was held in Cuba. For the last one, IWSS sponsored the participation of three outstanding graduate students from that region.

Please remember that all of us at the Board of Directors are here to serve you, so let us know how we can improve the Society.

*Bernal E. Valverde, IWS,
Copenhagen, Denmark*

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Victoria declares twelve Weeds of National Significance

Environment Minister John Thwaites today announced the declaration of twelve noxious weeds.

Twelve nationally recognised Weeds of National Significance (WONS) species have been declared in Victoria as restricted weeds, meaning they can no longer be sold or traded within Victoria. Twenty species are recognised nationally as WONS - weeds that cause significant production or environmental damage within Australia.

'Victoria took a lead role in establishing the WONS list, and we've been working hard to have these weeds assessed and declared under Victorian legislation as part of a comprehensive review of our noxious weeds list,' Mr Thwaites said.

'All 20 WONS, with the exception of some willow species, are now declared noxious weeds within Victoria. The expected willow species will also be assessed and considered for declaration as a component of the statewide review of noxious weeds. These assessments will assist in developing strategies for willow management across the State'

The decision to declare these species noxious weeds was based on their

invasiveness, potential for spread and impacts on environmental, economic and social values. 'Weeds have devastating impacts on local communities. While the costs to the natural environment are inestimable, weeds cost the Australian agricultural industry in excess of \$4 billion annually.' Mr Thwaites said.

Michael Gainger, Chief Executive Officer of the Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria welcomed the declaration of

the twelve new weeds: 'We have been working actively with our members to voluntarily remove 57 plant species from sale, including all WONS species. NGIV is committed to proactively preventing the spread of plants that have adverse impacts on environmental, economic and social values.' Mr Gainger said.

For further information, please contact the DSE's Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

New Weeds Declared under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 in October 2005. These have all been declared 'restricted weed' and this declaration applies to the whole of Victoria.

| Taxon | Common name |
|--|------------------------|
| <i>Acacia nilotica</i> subsp. <i>indica</i> | prickly acacia |
| <i>Annona glabra</i> | pond apple |
| <i>Asparagus asparagoides</i> | bridal creeper |
| <i>Cabomba caroliniana</i> | cabomba |
| <i>Cryptostegia grandiflora</i> | rubber vine |
| <i>Hymenachne amplexicaulis</i> | hymenachne |
| <i>Lantana camara</i> | lantana |
| <i>Mimosa pigra</i> | mimosa |
| <i>Nassella neesiana</i> | Chilean needle-grass |
| <i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i> | parkinsonia |
| <i>Salix</i> species (except <i>Salix alba</i> var. <i>caerulea</i> , <i>Salix alba</i> × <i>matsudana</i> , <i>Salix babylonica</i> , <i>Salix</i> × <i>calodendron</i> , <i>Salix caprea</i> 'Pendula', <i>Salix matsudana</i> 'Aurea', <i>Salix matsudana</i> 'Tortuosa', <i>Salix myrsinifolia</i> and <i>Salix</i> × <i>reichardtii</i>) | willows |
| <i>Tamarix aphylla</i> | athel pine or tamarisk |

MEMBERSHIP RATES

Weed Society of Victoria Inc.



| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Students | \$20.00 |
| Ordinary | \$40.00 |
| Corporate | \$100.00 |



PROXY FORM

I, (a).....appoint

(b).....

as my proxy to represent me at the AGM on 9/3/06 and vote on any motion as he/she sees fit.

Signed Date / /

(a) Name of financial member wishing to vote (votes from non-financial members will be excluded).

(b) Insert name of member attending meeting to whom proxy is delegated.

NOMINATION FORM

WSV Committee Positions

I nominate

Company/Position

For the position of

Signed

Seconded Date..... / /

NOMINATIONS CAN ONLY BE MADE BY FINANCIAL MEMBERS

Return to: PO Box 987, Frankston 3199 by 1/3/06

Acacia for Australia (or What's in a name..., are *Acacias Racosperma*?)

by Dick Brummitt, Secretary, Committee for Spermatophyta

I have very recently come back from the International Botanical Congress in Vienna, and am very relieved to say that the decision was taken to keep the name *Acacia* for the Australian [wattle] species.

But it was a very close run thing. All the support for the committee recommendation that came in from the Australian people in the last few weeks was a great help in getting this through. I have had over 250 letters of support, mostly by e-mail but some by aerogramme (even those just addressed to 'Kew, U.K.'). Every single one helped, from the letter received from the Minister for the Environment and Heritage to those from private individuals.

Not surprisingly, some people were perplexed as to why the question should ever have arisen, so perhaps you would like a short explanation. Until very recently, *Acacia* has been considered to be one genus of around 1300 species distributed throughout the tropics and Australia. Recent detailed study, including the modern methods of molecular analysis, have shown that it falls into three main groups, with two other smaller ones in Central America. Apart from about 10 species in northern Queensland, all the Australian species fall into one group, which extends very sparingly also to some of the islands in the Pacific, totalling about 1000 species. The remaining 300 or so species fall into two roughly equal groups in the Americas, tropical and South Africa and tropical Asia. If each of these groups is to be regarded as a distinct genus (which most, but not all, botanists now seem to accept), the question arises as to which one is to be called *Acacia*. We have a system which says that the group which includes the 'type species' of the name must retain the name. But one can make a proposal to change that 'type species' in exceptional circumstances. The type species is usually one of the first species to be named in the genus, and in the case of *Acacia* this has long been accepted as one of the African species, *A. nilotica*. With this as the type species, 45% of the non-Australian species (including about half of the African species) would retain the name *Acacia*, 55% would become *Senegalia*, and virtually all the 1000 Australian species would be called *Racosperma*. Note that half of the African species are expected to be taken out of *Acacia* and put in *Senegalia* anyway,

whatever decision was taken over the type of *Acacia*.

In 2003 two Australian botanists, Tony Orchard from Canberra and Bruce Maslin from Perth, published a proposal in the journal *Taxon*, arguing that the type should be changed to an Australian species, *A. penninervis*. This was automatically referred to the appropriate committee, the Committee for Spermatophyta, of which I am the secretary. The committee has 15 members – two from Asia, one from Africa, one from S. America, six from Europe, four from America and one from Australia. I received, and circulated, opinions both in favour and against the proposal, involving the longest correspondence ever in the history of the committee (which does not meet in person, all matters being dealt with by correspondence). Any hopes that those with African interests would say 'Well the Australians have far more species than we have, and we have got to change half our species anyway, so good luck to Australia' were dashed from the start. There was major opposition from those with African (and other) interests. However, when a vote was taken in the committee, the rules were that in order to recommend acceptance of the proposal there needed to be a 60% majority, i.e. a minimum of nine in favour out of 15, and the vote was 9 to 6 – just enough! A report was published in *Taxon* in August 2004. The next formality was to pass the recommendation through the General Committee, normally just a rubber-stamping operation, and although (unusually) there was some opposition, it passed by 16 to 6.

The next step was to pass the General Committee's recommendation through

the meeting of the Nomenclature Section of the International Botanical Congress, which was held in Vienna from 12 to 16 July in the week before the Congress proper. This meeting was attended by around 200 botanists, many of whom carried institutional votes from their own or other institutions, and many issues were hotly debated in a lecture theatre. Conservation proposals are normally just passed through in the business at the end of the meeting, and never in the history of these things had any individual case been challenged at this point. However, those opposing switching the type to an Australian species had let it be known that they wished to oppose the *Acacia* recommendation, and it was put to a debate on the last day, Saturday 16 July. Not only had the pro-African-type lobby come in numbers to make their case, they had solicited large numbers of institutional votes from places which did not send a representative. This is within the rules, but never had so much lobbying been done before, and, in my view, it was unfairly conducted. There was a debate for (I suspect) about half an hour, at the end of which the chairman ruled that since the committees' recommendations had needed a 60% majority to be accepted, the move to overturn it also needed a 60% majority. A secret ballot was held, and those wanting to keep the African species as type got 247 votes and those favouring the Australian type got 203. It was 55% only, and the 60% majority was not achieved. Australia had won – but only just! Even then, when the final plenary session of the whole Congress was held a week later, Saturday 23 July, somebody saw fit to raise the matter for discussion yet again, but,

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fortunately, this was quickly squashed.

I can add a personal note to all this. I have worked most of my life on African plants and my natural instincts would be to support African interests. However, from the start I could see that the case for adopting an Australian type was overwhelming. Firstly, and undisputedly, the number of *Acacia* species is vastly greater in Australia. The number of species there is about 1000, while the number of species affected in Africa (after excluding the ones put in *Senegalia* whatever the outcome) is only 79 – a ratio of 13:1. Then the economic arguments are very heavily in Australia's favour, both because of the very large agroforestry industry, through which Australian species are grown as a commercial crop in many parts of the world, and the growing horticultural importance. African *Acacia* just cannot compete. But the correspondence of the last few weeks has given me an even greater insight into the importance of *Acacia* to the people of Australia. I have felt quite moved that so many people have written to me that *Acacia* is part of their national psyche, part of their national heritage, part of their everyday life, and in some cases part of their everyday business. To say nothing of there being 46 streets in Melbourne called *Acacia* something, and other nice points of information. And apparently the name *Racosperma* would not be popular for the national emblem. I was moved to say in Vienna that if the proposal to adopt an Australian type was not approved, it would be the greatest injustice to the users of plant names in all my experience...

Growing Australian, September 2005

Weed wipeout – an interactive computer game

'Weed Wipeout' is an interactive computer game developed by the CRC for Australian Weed Management to provide a fun and enjoyable way to learn about weed management.

As a Weed Wipeout player you'll be managing a farm ravaged by weeds. You'll need to make lots of decisions about the most appropriate weed management strategies for the farm you're managing. Plenty of unexpected events occur, keeping the job challenging, fun and interesting! Just like real life you'll need to manage your bank balance while dealing with the weed problems on the farm.

Then there are choices to be made about the use of biological control, pasture management, fire, chemicals or a combination of all these and more. What will happen if the weeds on the farm develop resistance to the chemicals you use? The game is available to be played, at no cost, from the CRC for Australian Weed Management's website: www.weeds.crc.org.au by following the links to 'For Schools' and 'Weed Wipeout'.

Take on the challenge. CAN YOU WIPE OUT THE WEEDS OR WILL YOU BE WIPED OUT? www.weeds.crc.org.au

For further information please contact: Susanna Greig, Educational Officer, CRC for Australian Weed Management, School of Rural Science and Agriculture, AGSS, University of New England, Armidale NSW 2351, Tel: (02) 6773 2809, Fax: (02) 6773 3238, Email: susanna.greig@une.edu.au

2008 IWSS Congress

The next International Weed Science Congress will be held in Vancouver, Canada, 23–26 June 2008. The Board would like to receive your suggestions and to know if you would like to volunteer time in organizing sessions or symposia. Please contact President Bernal Valverde (bev@kvl.dk or ideatrop@racsa.co.cr) or any other IWSS officer and be part of this major effort.



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