



Newsletter of the Weed Society of Victoria Inc.

volume 21 issues 1&2 2010

Weedscene

What's on

17th Australasian Weeds Conference

26–30 September 2010

Plant Protection Society of New Zealand, Christchurch, New Zealand.
'New Frontiers in New Zealand – together we can beat the weeds'
Details: info@17awc.org.

Elmore Field Days

5–7 October 2010

Includes the Syngenta Learning Centre, Midland Highway Elmore. Syngenta invest almost a billion dollars annually in the research and development of products and techniques to improve the yield and quality of crops. This site is a large scale replicated trial demonstrating and evaluating herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and management tactics.

Of particular interest are:

- Axial herbicide.
- Canola herbicide programmes comparison.
- Resistance management with knockdown herbicides.
- Application technology.
- Herbicide tolerance in a crop and pasture matrix.
- Boxer Gold.

And much, much more!

Appeal for help

18th Australasian Weeds Conference 2012

This conference will be run by the Weed Society of Victoria on behalf of the Council of Australasian Weed Societies in October 2012. The dates will be the week of 8th October and the venue will be the Sebel and Citigate Albert Park, Melbourne.

The Society has started to organise the conference with the help of professional conference organisers Eventcorp and has chosen the following Chairs of committees:

Program Committee – Nigel Ainsworth,
Department of Primary Industries
Melbourne, nigel.ainsworth@dpi.vic.gov.au.

Proceedings Committee – Ian Faithfull,
Department of Primary Industries,
Frankston, ian.faithfull@dpi.vic.gov.au.

Field trip Committee – Ann Lawrie,
RMIT University, Bundoora,
aclawrie@rmit.edu.au.

Sponsorship Committee – Greg Wells,
Dow AgroSciences, WELLS1@dow.com.

Media/Publicity Committee – Chris Knight, Land Management Systems & On-line Spraying, Mitcham, cknight@lmsonline.com.au.

Conference Chair – Ros Shepherd, Weed Society of Victoria, secwssv@surf.net.au.

These people need your help.

The theme of the conference will be *Developing solutions to evolving weed problems*, a theme which is all encompassing, and Nigel will be looking for speakers who are new and innovative, who have something interesting, provocative and thought provoking to discuss. Do you know of any such speaker? Or would you like to help any of the Chairs find speakers, a location for a field trip or anyone who would like to send a bit of sponsorship our way? The more sponsorship we get the lower the registration fee will be.

So please think about joining one of the committees, or sponsoring the conference in some way. It is hoped that much of the work can be done by email rather than face to face meetings, so even if you do not live or work in Melbourne this is no drawback to being a part of this.

Help us make sure that this important conference is first rate and will be remembered for a long time. However, this can only happen with your help and support. We do have a list of people who have indicated that they will help, but we do need more helpers for all committees.

Ros Shepherd

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Joining the Weed Society of Victoria

The benefits of membership to WSV include:

- Weedscene: newsletter packed full of information
- eWeedscene: regular electronic bulletin on weed news and events
- Discounts to WSV seminars, workshops, conferences and other events
- Opportunities to network with others.

To apply for membership, download and print the membership application form from the WSV website, www.wsvic.org.au, complete the details and mail to the WSV Secretary.

Weedscene Newsletter of the Weed Society of Victoria Inc.

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Bill (W.T.) Parsons, 1928–2010 by Ian Faithfull

Dr William Thomas Parsons, author of *Noxious Weeds of Victoria* (1973, reprinted 1976, 1981), and, with E.G. Cuthbertson, of *Noxious Weeds of Australia* (1992, 2nd Edn 2001) died on 3 May 2010 at the age of 82. Bill was the inaugural President of the Weed Science Society of Victoria in 1966–67 and had a distinguished career in the Victorian Department of Crown Lands and Survey (DCLS).

The noxious weeds books long functioned as weeders' 'bibles', essential references for government pest plants officers and researchers, students, farmers and park management staff, and were very widely and popularly used by others involved in weed management.

Bill was born at Albert Park, Victoria and attended Upwey High School. He studied agricultural science at Melbourne University and joined the DCLS in 1952 as an Assistant Research Officer in the Weeds Research section. In 1959 he was awarded a Commonwealth fund fellowship to study in California and elsewhere in the USA. He rose to become Officer in Charge of the Keith Turnbull Research Station (KTRS) at Frankston in 1966, and later Chair of the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board (VNWDB). As Officer in Charge at KTRS he was responsible for research projects including vermin and weeds, extension activities and administration of the Station (VNWDB ?1974). During the early to mid 1970s he thus oversaw the work of research staff including Tom Donaldson, Les Schmidl, Ron Amor, Bob Richardson, Colin Piggan, David McKenzie, Bruce Woodfield, Ros Shepherd, Brian Coman and Jim Backholer.

His PhD thesis, supervised by Dr Jack Wilson in the School of Agriculture and Forestry at Melbourne University, was completed in December 1977. Bill noted in the acknowledgements that the Secretary for Lands was 'anxious' that he undertake the study and that the VNWDB and KTRS

had provided support and facilities. His thesis, on the ecology, physiology and management of slender thistle and winged slender thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus* and *C. tenuiflorus*) in Victorian pastures, had a particular emphasis on seed germination and seedling recruitment. Bill sorted out the morphological distinctions between the species, which had often been confused in the field. Seeds were found to be subject to innate, induced and enforced dormancy and germination was found to be restricted to a six week period after the autumn break.

In the late 1970s he went up to head office at 2 Treasury Place in Melbourne to undertake more administrative duties (Ros Shepherd pers. comm. 2010) as an Executive Research Officer in the Division of Inspection and Vermin and Noxious Weeds. He was a member of the Premier's Pesticides Review Committee and the Congenital Birth Defects Committee (Victorian Consultative Council 1978) which investigated an 'apparent increase in deformities and miscarriages in Yarram' (Ansley and Carney 1980), South Gippsland, Victoria, allegedly linked to use of chlorinated phenoxyacetic acid herbicides. Parsons defended the use of these herbicides, being quoted for example that 'On present knowledge it was fair to assume [they] caused no hazard to people' (Anon. 1978), and the Committee found no evidence that events at Yarram were due to herbicide exposure. The phenoxyacetic acid herbicides were first used in Victoria c. 1950 and became the major chemical treatments applied to a wide range of weeds through to the 1980s (see Parsons 1973). In Gippsland 2,4-D was the main chemical used for the control of ragwort and a range of other weeds and 2,4,5-T was predominantly used on blackberry, along with some other woody weeds. These two herbicides became highly controversial in particular because of their use in butyl ester forms by the US military in the Agent Orange defoliant in the Second Indochina War. In South Vietnam alone,



W.T. Parsons, 1973

crop destruction and defoliation operations were applied to over 2 million hectares between 1962 and 1969 (Neilands 1971). Despite conflicting scientific opinions the tide of evidence against these herbicides gradually mounted. The methodology and statistical analysis used in the Consultative Committee report on the Yarram cluster were later shown by La Trobe University zoologist Peter Rawlinson to contain major flaws. 2,4,5-T was slowly withdrawn from use across Australia and 2,4-D has now largely been displaced by other herbicides.

Bill was also involved in a 1984–1986 study of 2023 operational pest management staff employed by the Department of Lands between 1951 and 1971 which examined whether exposure to phenoxyacetic acid herbicides had affected workers' health, in particular resulting in any excessive mortality (Anon. 1986). The Victorian Departments employed a field force of several hundred men, many of whom used the herbicides on a daily basis through six months of the year over many years. Parsons noted (Anon. 1986) that the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands (DCFL, the successor to the Lands Department) 'had not been aware of any untoward problems experienced by its workmen with these compounds' but that 'its workforce provides an excellent sample... possibly of world significance, into the long term effects' (Anon. 1986).

continued on next page/...

Indeed this study was reviewed by the Australian Royal Commission into the Effects of Agent Orange, which concluded that it provided strong evidence that the herbicides did not increase the incidence of cancer in general, or of particular rare cancers.

Bill presented lectures on weeds at Monash University over a period of 20 years, and also lectured on weed ecology at the University of Melbourne. He retired from DCFL in 1986 at the age of 58. *Noxious Weeds of Australia* was completed in retirement, and has been described as the culmination of his life's work. The post-retirement years also saw a continued concern about the effects of herbicides on the community and government workforce.

His collection of weed images (*Weeds of Australia: photographs of weed species in Australia*) totalling c. 1300 slides and 112 photographs and negatives was donated to the National Herbarium of Victoria in April 2002. Many of the images were featured in the two books. The collection is accompanied by a list of the slides, which were also scanned and saved as digital files by Les Bould at the Keith Turnbull Research Institute around that time and are currently in the care of Dr David McLaren.

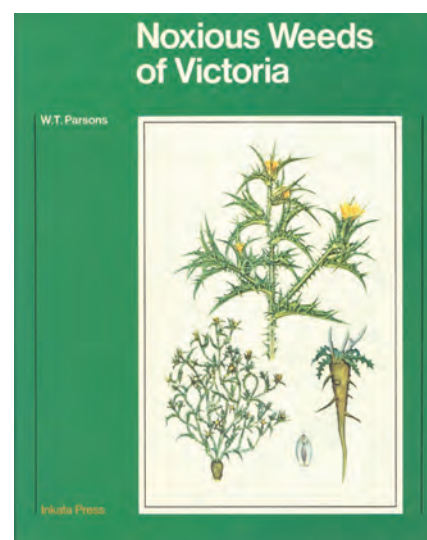
Bill has been described as a genuine, kind and generous intellectual who always acted with honour and integrity. His contributions to weed science and management have been widely recognised and respected throughout Australia and overseas. We regret the passing of an inspiring man and a Weed Society founding father.

Acknowledgements

I thank Ian Parsons for reviewing a draft of this article.

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-12004/78 Parliament of Victoria,
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Melbourne, viii + 55 pp.

New project

Community implementation of biological control of weeds in south-eastern Australia

by Andy Rabba, Monash University

Project coordinator Dr Charles Grech, DPI Attwood 03 9217 4120

Building on the success of the National
bridal creeper and Paterson's curse
programs comes a new national
biological control project. Primarily
funded by the Commonwealth
governments 'Caring for our Country'
program, the two year project will
target six of our 'Weeds of National
Significance (WoNS)' species. The
WoNS targeted are gorse, blackberry,
salvinia, boneseed, bridal creeper and
bitou bush. The project will also target
the highly invasive English and Cape
brooms. These weeds have significant
impacts on key environmental assets in
World Heritage areas. The project will
deploy newer weed biocontrol agents
which are not yet widespread across this
range of the weeds.

This new project is a collaborative
effort between National Resource
Management (NRM) regional bodies
and government agencies of four
states'. These include; The Department
of Primary Industries (DPI) of Victoria,
DII of NSW, the Tasmanian Institute of

Agricultural Research (TIAR), the South
Australian Herbarium, and the South
Australian Research and Development
Institute (SARDI). These agencies hope to
address multiple Caring for our Country
objectives, including biodiversity and
natural icons, coastal environments and
critical aquatic habitats.

While the inter-agency collaboration
generated by this project is important,
the main focus will be on community
involvement in the distribution and
evaluation of biological control agents. The
project will involve at least 80 community
groups and 116 schools in the release of
biological control agents at over 300 sites.
There is a strong education focus and
this will be delivered through the highly
successful 'Weed Warriors' program.

With the coordinated and sustained efforts
of the agencies and communities'
involved, the management of invasive
weeds with biological control will be much
more efficiently delivered and far more
effective.

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Agriculture

Rotowiper: a 'new fashioned' weed control machine



It is fascinating the scientific avenues pursued by the collective of companies developing and commercialising chemical weed control products. These products have amazing plant selectivity due to the peculiarities of their responses to biochemical pathways.

Sometimes we ignore the usefulness of physical selectivity in the application of herbicides. We have seen shielded sprayers, Greenseekers, and ropewick applicators. Possibly one of the most interesting and cost effective is the Rotowiper, a product out of New Zealand with what appears to be a long and effective service in the pastoral industries there.

The Rotowiper uses a carpeted drum of 1.8 to 4.5 m working width which rotates in the opposite direction of travel. As the roller (which is ground driven on trailed models) rotates, it applies herbicides to the stem and undersides of leaves.



It follows that this machine has obvious applications to weeds of greater height to the pasture or crop; typical examples are onion grass, pin rush, dock, advanced thistles, marshmallow and bracken.

The Australian distributor for Rotowiper, Swan Hill Chemicals, reportedly has field experience with using systemic products

such as glyphosate, dicamba, triclopyr, metsulfuron and oxyfluorfen with this machine. Trailed and linkage mounted versions are available for use with utilities, ATVs and tractors.

Quite conceivably there could be a myriad of applications for this type of machine in both agricultural and environmental scenarios. Any ideas folks?

Exciting developments in new crop herbicide evaluation

Farmers and agricultural advisors are anticipating what will possibly be the most important weed control product released in a decade. 'Sakura' is a potent pre-emergent herbicide being developed for the Australian wheat, barley and triticale market. Pre-commercialisation trials by the manufacturer of the product, Bayer, the University of Adelaide and grower driven grower groups Birchip Cropping Group and Mallee Sustainable Farming, have demonstrated Sakura offers consistently high level of grass weed control including annual ryegrass, Group A and B resistant ryegrass, barley grass and brome grass.

The active constituent of Sakura is pyroxasulfone, and was isolated by Kumiai Chemical Industry Co. and labelled KIH-485. Subsequent glasshouse and field

testing by Bayer (as BAY-191) showed this molecule had low phytotoxic effects on a range of crops including sunflower, corn, soybean, wheat, barley, lupins and peas. Pyroxasulfone inhibits the biosynthesis of very-long chain fatty acids and is categorised a Group K herbicide.

Work done in a trial at Roseworthy (SA) by Sam Kleemann and Peter Boutsalis proved Sakura provided the highest rate (84%) of annual ryegrass control compared to other existing products over single disc, double disc and knife point seeding methods. Furthermore the residual activity of Sakura retarded the growth of surviving weeds. The authors noted trifluralin damage to wheat plots sown with the single disc seeder, but crop safety was not compromised by the Sakura treatment.

Interestingly, in what appears to be a world first, Kumiai is collaborating with the Western Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative to address the potential of herbicide resistance before the projected commercial release of Sakura in 2011. WAHRI researchers Roberto Busi and Todd Gaines are investigating whether resistance will occur under sub-lethal doses, as well as testing annual ryegrass populations to very high pyroxasulfone rates.

All going well, Sakura will be the saving grace to many no-till farmers that are backed into a corner with ryegrass which has multiple herbicide resistance. Tanya Fowler, a 4th year honours student at the University of Western Australia calculated Sakura could return \$56 million in benefits to such farmers.

Developments in herbicide resistance

The onset of resistance to certain herbicides in various weeds is now the most important field of research in weed management. An integral part of this is to firstly document such occurrences and where they occur in Australia. The second part is to investigate why some chemicals are more prone to become part of the resistance problem.

A key figure in this research is Dr Chris Preston, a lecturer at the School of Agriculture, Food and Wine, University of Adelaide. The University is a core participant of the Co-operative Research Centre for Australian Weed Management, which has undertaken herbicide resistance as its major project. The Centre has determined weeds cost the agricultural industries in excess of \$3.4 billion annually, and the current threat of herbicide resistance could cause this to blow out.

The undertakings of the CRC are many and varied:

- mechanisms and inheritance of multiple glyphosate resistance in *Lolium rigidum*

- gene flow in glyphosate tolerant canola
- management of trifluralin resistance in no-till cropping systems
- practices for the management of branched broomrape
- mechanisms and inheritance of 2,4-D resistance in *Sisymbrium orientale*
- cross resistance in Group A herbicides.

Collating the results of resistance surveys has been a big undertaking, but has identified some new threats. It appears most farms in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia have some annual ryegrass (ARG) populations resistant to Group A or B, with a trend of increasing DIM resistance. Of greater concern is the rise of trifluralin resistance in South Australia. It was determined almost 50% of all ARG populations surveyed had some level of resistance to trifluralin, currently the backbone of grass control in minimum tillage cropping systems.

Interestingly the CRC have followed up a number of reports of wild oats (*Avena*



Dr Chris Preston

fatua) with resistance to tralkoxydim (Group A), but also flupropan-methyl (Group K). The CRC intends to investigate whether there is a link between repeated use of fenoxaprop and clodinafop (both Group A) and flupropan resistance and why.

The work of the CRC and the Western Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative now forms some of the most important weed research in the country. It encompasses surveys, biochemical studies and testing a range of management responses. Stay tuned to this channel...

Star weed doing a turn in turf

A small plant found in a bowling green in Melbourne during the spring of 2001 was identified as *Plantago triandra*, a member of the plantain family. In its native New Zealand it is known as 'star weed' due to its star-shaped rosette growth habit. According to the National Herbarium of Victoria it was the first sighting of this plant in Australia.

Since this 2001 discovery, star weed has been found at a handful of turf grass sites around Melbourne. More recently in May 2010 Michael Moerkerk, DPI Horsham, discovered it in a local bowling green.

Star weed has a tendency to form clusters which means that turf grass is easily smothered. It produces very small seeds on many tiny stalks, so they are easily carried away on shoes, bowls and cleaning cloths, and even in pockets.

The plant will grow from cuttings as well as seed, so physically removing plants is rarely successful because it will regenerate from any remnants of tissue left in the soil. In New Zealand plants often do not develop seed until their second year, so early detection and eradication may be a good way to reduce the spread of star weed.

Adapted from *Golf and Sports Turf* <http://www.golfandsportsturf.com.au/article.asp?ArticleID=123> (accessed July 2010).

See also: Walmsley, D.R. and Cousens, R.D. (2009). New Zealand starweed (*Plantago triandra* subsp. *masoniae*) in Victoria: ecology, impacts and recommendations. Proceedings of the 4th Victorian Weed Conference, 'Plants behaving badly: in agriculture and the environment', pp. 100-1. (Weed Society of Victoria, Frankston).

Photos: Michael Moerkerk, DPI



Weeds in perspective

Weed sleuth: the case of the stray native grass

The following story is true. People's names have been changed to protect the innocent.

A number of years ago an agronomist was called to a property in northern Victoria to identify an unusual grass weed in some irrigated lucerne. The farm was on an alluvial floodplain with mainly red, slightly acidic duplex sodic soils. This farmer, Roger, was very fussy with weeds, and provided a quality assurance information package with his lucerne hay at the point of sale. All his spray activities were very well documented and his chemical shed actually had a stock register.

This farmer also grew winter cereals, sorghum and vetch for hay to integrate his weed control as well as diversify his risk and even out cash flow for the business.

Lucerne hay destined for the chaff market remained his core business, and the presence of weeds posed a real threat as a hay contaminant, as the product could be rejected. The usual suspects in this situation were shepherd's purse, annual ryegrass, hogweed and capeweed, all which were cleaned up quite efficiently with Spray.Seed and diuron.

However, this particular year a certain grass appeared to thrive amongst the usually spotless lucerne. It grew in a conspicuous clump and began to run up, so obviously would contaminate the first hay cut in November. The agronomist, Dean, was called out and in the absence of a panicle could not make a definite identification. A plant was sent to the Herbarium. Nevertheless, some action needed to be taken and quickly.

Dean had deduced it was a fast growing summer active grass which he simply named 'Grass X', until otherwise informed. Extrapolating his experience with other summer active grasses such as *Setaria* and *Digitaria* he recommended an application of a robust rate of butoxydim and its appropriate adjuvant.

The results were very pleasing to Roger. A quick response meant the grass had withered away and the withholding period was well and truly lapsed by the time the first hay cut of the season commenced.

When the Herbarium faxed back, the plant was found to be either cup grass (*Eriochloa creba*, perennial) or early spring grass (*E. pseudoacrotricha*), but a panicle was needed to confirm the species. Cup grass is a native of central



cup grass
(*Eriochloa creba*)

and north-west New South Wales and the arid interior of Queensland. Spring grass is apparently indigenous to northern Victoria and throughout New South Wales as an understorey of open woodland or a ground cover in grassland. It was concluded some seed heads had hitched a ride underneath a vehicle on a camping trip and been deposited a hundred miles from home.

Both species are still doing well in their home environment and the farmer is still producing prime lucerne hay when irrigation water permits.

Genus *Eriochloa* (from the Greek *erion*, wool, and *chloe*, grass), 20 to 30 species of annual and perennials, native to warm temperate and tropical areas of the globe.

- culms clumped
- leaf ligules a row of hairs 1 mm long; leaf blade mostly 2–6 mm wide
- inflorescence a racemose panicle; spikelets clustered 3.7–4.2 mm long.

Other members of this genus, such as *Eriochloa villosa*, are grown as an ornamental or dried arrangement in the USA for its distinctive inflorescence.



early spring grass
(*Eriochloa pseudoacrotricha*)

Lightweight fine for mega retailer over Mexican feather grass

In July 2010 hardware and garden supplies giant Bunnings and four plant wholesalers were fined \$15,000 in the Melbourne Magistrates' Court for buying and selling the state prohibited weed, Mexican feather grass (MFG).

Bunnings, along with Ball Australia, Oasis Horticulture, Summerhill Nurseries and Regal Blooms pleaded guilty to charges of buying and selling the noxious weed during the period January–May 2008. They agreed to pay \$50,000 compensation and the DPI was also awarded court costs.

This legal outcome is the first of its kind, and hopefully will act as a deterrent to mischievous or careless plant retailers. The director of invasive plants and operations at the DPI, Brendan Roughead, suggested the estimated cost of such an incursion could easily be in excess of \$10 million.

In what appears to be a fortuitous moment, and a positive endorsement of the Department, the rogue plants were apparently spotted in Bunnings by an off-duty DPI officer. Reports say some 4800 plants were sold for \$39.98 in an attractive pink teacup shaped pot as part of a Mothers' Day promotion so invitingly labelled 'Regal Sensations'.

The MFG (*Nassella tenuissima*) was supposedly imported and wrongly labelled *Stipa capillata* and *Stipa lessingiana*. The plants are extremely similar in appearance and taxonomy, and require DNA testing for accurate identification.

In what became a biosecurity mini-crisis, these plants were also distributed in South Australia, Queensland and 300 plants in the Nation's capital, ACT. By the time the alert and subsequent recall had commenced, some plants were already planted in gardens as feature plants. Some plants had set seed and required soil removal as well as plant removal and destruction.

Coincidentally, the issue in Queensland was also spotted by an off-duty Biosecurity officer. Sounds like we got lucky.

MFG is a native to Southern US, Mexico and South America. Just as with its noxious cousins Serrated tussock and Chilean needle grass, that have already emigrated here, each plant has the ability to produce hundreds of seeds. MFG has drought tolerance and the fact it has low palatability and digestibility makes it an enormous threat to pastoral industries and native grasslands.

Ironically, in North America MFG is considered desirable as an ornamental. The words of Norman Winter (horticulturalist, Mississippi): 'Grasses like Mexican feather grass do something else incredible. When placed in the background where backlit from the setting sun they glisten like they have a small coat of ice... the frosty kiss of those cold fall mornings makes the ornamental grass the prettiest place in the landscape'. Sounds irresistible.

It appears the DPI response was fast and thorough. 180 wholesale and retail outlets were inspected and 2208 plants seized, and a public recall of the plants sold instigated. This, and the legal actions are commendable, however some issues linger. How many plants were sold as cash transactions and therefore hard to trace? How many plants are still out there? Does \$50,000 compensation really cover the man hours and resources consumed in the response. Sounds like 'could well be and not enough'.

Bunnings, the powerhouse company that famously enjoyed 2003–04 profit of \$392 million before interest and tax, certainly won't miss that compensation money or fine. The agricultural industries and weed minded community can only hope that this lightweight fine is sufficient to jolt the conscience of the wholesale plant industry to never let this happen again.





milk thistle/variegated thistle
(*Silybum marianum*)

Weeds: friend or foe?

Variegated thistle

Throughout history plants of all kinds have been utilised for medicinal purposes. There are currently a number of herbal products based on milk thistle/variegated thistle (*Silybum marianum*) extract. Some products are labelled as St Mary's or Holy thistle, referring to its use in post Biblical times as being analogous to the salubrious breast milk of Jesus' mother no less! Other cultures have used sowthistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*) in a similar way, but also mainly for culinary purpose.



could not substantiate this claim. Ironically silymarin is not water soluble, and needs an alcohol extractant.

Is it the placebo effect or an undervalued cure? As we all know, variegated thistle has spiny leaf margins and spiky flower heads and at first meeting one would instantly assume no redeeming features. Yet there are those using certain thistle herbal products who continue to do so and those making them are spruiking their curative properties. In this regard both science and history appear to credit and discredit the humble milk thistle.

Even the ancient Romans documented the use of what was to be later named St. Mary's thistle being prescribed for the use in repairing liver functions.

Modern analysis has isolated the active compounds as a complex of flavonolignans collectively termed silymarin. Silymarin has been reputedly attributed to be an antioxidant. Other benefits claimed are its mild laxative effect, and also mitigating psoriasis and gall bladder disease. Some claim it cures cirrhosis of the liver, although a US health department study



sowthistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*)

It has been said...

'If I could remember the names of all those particles I'd be a botanist'.
Enrico Fermi 1901–54

'A good politician is quite as unthinkable as an honest burglar'.
H.L. Mencken 1880–1956

'I exercise strong self-control. I never drink anything stronger than gin before breakfast'.
W.C. Fields 1880–1946

'Advertising may be described as the science of arresting human intelligence long enough to get money from it'.
Stephen Leacock 1869–1944

Player profile

James O'Brien



In this issue we put James O'Brien under the microscope. James is the President of the WSV and last week we managed to track him down and borrow five minutes of his time whilst he was prostrate looking for *Bryobia* mite. He reluctantly spoke to us, but the bamboo shoots under the fingernails soon got him talking.

Name:	James O'Brien
Age:	Not telling
Occupation:	Agronomist with Landmark at Timboon-Cobden
Years with WSV:	3
In a previous life:	Dairy farmer
Favourite food:	Pizza
Favourite TV show:	Spicks and Specks
Favourite movie:	O Brother, where art thou?
AFL team:	St Kilda
Hobbies:	Riding road bikes, history reading and research
Phobias:	Being in all glass high rise buildings
Ambitions:	To reinvigorate the WSV in my year as president, then become the obvious replacement to George Clooney

Media release

Framework to weed out invasive plants and animals

From the Minister for Environment & Climate Change

Mr Helper said the Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework will be released in four modules and focus on preventing and eradicating invasive species before they took hold.

'We all know what can happen with an invasive animal such as rabbits, once they start breeding they are quickly out of control. The best strategy is prevention before matters get out of hand,' Mr Helper said.

'The first module will deal with invasive land-based plants and animals, the following three will cover land invertebrates, freshwater fish and invertebrates and marine pests.'

Mr Helper said the Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework aligns with the Biosecurity Strategy for Victoria released last year and would set a comprehensive risk management approach for key stakeholders such as catchment management authorities that would then inform the actions of grassroots conservation groups and landholders.

For more information and the full version of the IPAPF, visit www.dse.vic.gov.au.

Wednesday, 19 May 2010

Protecting our parks, waterways, biodiversity and agriculture from the threat of invasive plants and animals through early intervention and eradication is the key element of a strategy released by the Brumby Labor Government today.

Launching the Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework, Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings and Agriculture Minister Joe Helper said invasive species had a major negative impact on the environment as well as agricultural productivity which affects the sustainability of rural communities.

'Strong communities need a healthy environment which is why we are working in partnership with the community to address the serious issue of invasive species,' Mr Jennings said.

'The Invasive Plants and Animals Policy Framework aims to protect our native flora

and fauna from harm while also preventing losses to primary producers.

'The Australian Bureau of Statistics has estimated the direct cost to agricultural businesses in Victoria of controlling weeds to be \$253 million and can cause increased fuel loads for fire, alter water flow through aquatic systems and cause erosion. Yield loss and control costs are passed onto the consumer.

'Invasive animals such as wild dogs, foxes, feral cats and pigs have contributed to the decline, and in some cases extinction, of numerous native fauna species. Ground-nesting birds, small animals and reptiles are particularly at risk.

'This framework recognises that community-led action and support of major stakeholders are essential to complement the roles of land and natural resource managers.'

IS THAT PLANT POISONOUS?

An Australian field guide for livestock, pets and people

by R.C.H. SHEPHERD

There are a large number of plants found on farms and bush blocks, along roadsides, in waste places and in gardens that are considered poisonous to livestock (particularly cattle, sheep, goats and/or horses), domestic pets (mainly dogs and cats) and people.

IS THAT PLANT POISONOUS? will help you become more aware and familiar with these plants, most of which are of a weedy nature. It has been written for everyone, but especially for farmers, gardeners, bush walkers, pet owners, veterinary surgeons and parents.

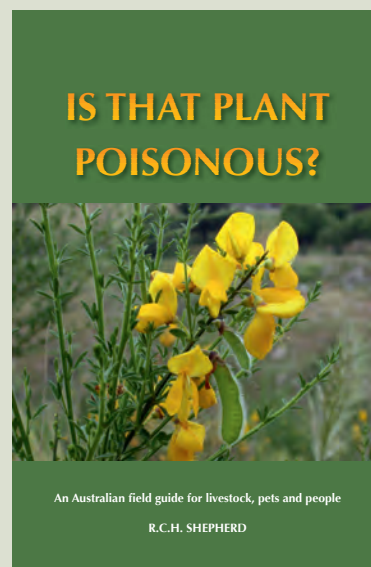
The book uses easy-to-understand language with colour photographs to aid plant identification. It details who the plant is poisonous to, which parts of the plant are poisonous and the toxins that are likely to be encountered, as well as symptoms of poisoning. Symptoms are also listed according to plant species and animal in a comprehensive and informative appendix.

All the plants in this book are found in Australia.

June 2010, 264 pages, full colour, gatefold cover
ISBN 9780980388527

Price \$55.00 [includes GST] + postage

R.G. and F.J. Richardson



Supported by:



The Weed Society of
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