

Weed Spotter Queensland Network Newsletter



Summer 2010 edition

Welcome to the Summer Newsletter

Inside this issue:

- New declaration of ornamental gingers
- Pond apple
- Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) update
- Harrisia cactus
- Neem trees
- Tropical soda apple alert
- Mexican feather grass
- Weedy Zornia identification
- New records
- Contacts

Newly declared plants: ornamental gingers

The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) has recently updated the declared species lists. The most important change to be aware of is that three ornamental gingers are now declared in Queensland.

Yellow ginger (*Hedychium flavescens*) has been declared a Class 1 pest as it is not known to be naturalised and could cause adverse effects if established. It is subject to eradication from the state and landowners must take reasonable steps to keep their land free of yellow ginger. It is a serious offence to introduce, keep or supply yellow ginger and penalties of up to \$80 000 apply.

Two other gingers which have already naturalised in Cook and Moreton districts are kahili ginger (*Hedychium gardnerianum*) and white ginger (*Hedychium coronarium*). These have been declared Class 3 pests as they are established in Queensland and have, or could

have, an adverse economic, environmental or social impact. The primary objective of their Class 3 listing is to prevent sale, therefore reducing the risk of the spread of these pests into new areas.

Landholders are not required to control kahili ginger and white ginger unless their land is adjacent to an environmentally significant area. It is a serious offence to supply these two gingers and penalties of up to \$20 000 apply.

Please help us spread the word by ensuring friends and local nurseries are aware of these recent declared pest plant listings.

For more information please visit the DEEDI website at http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4790_19013.htm.

Kahili ginger flower.



Kahlil ginger rhizome.



White ginger flower.

Photos: S. Navie

The Queensland Weed Spotters Network is a joint initiative of the Department of Environment and Resource Management and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation

New pond apple discoveries

Two new pond apple (*Annona glabra*) infestations have been discovered—nearly 3000 kilometres apart, but found within days of each other— thanks to members of the public.

A known, previously thought small and isolated, infestation near Mackay in Queensland was to be the location of a resource sharing day in late October. Unfortunately rain put paid to any weed killing action on the day, however an ABC Radio interview organised by Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) Biosecurity Officer, Peter Alden went ahead. A member of the public heard the interview and contacted Mr Alden as he thought he had seen “some of those trees” around some of his favourite fishing spots. His suspicions proved correct.

Work is now continuing between DEEDI, Mackay Regional Council and Reef Catchments NRM Group to establish the extent of the Mackay infestation, which is isolated in terms of its proximity to the ‘core’ infestation between Cardwell and Cooktown in the Wet Tropics.

A similar story occurred in Darwin where Weeds Branch staff from the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport (NRETAS) were alerted to a new infestation in the Litchfield Municipality by a member of the public. The area, south of Darwin, is now subject to a concerted media campaign and efforts to define the current distribution, with eradication from the Northern Territory the ultimate aim.

Pond apple is a Weed of National Significance (WoNS). It is a deciduous tree introduced to Australia from South America for use as root stock for custard apples. Unlike many other weeds, it has the ability to colonise undisturbed areas and tolerates waterlogging in brackish and salt water—putting mangroves and wetlands at particular risk as it forms dense thickets that can exclude native species. Its fruits are known to disperse on ocean currents and seeds can remain viable for lengthy periods, putting much of the coastline of Northern Australia at risk of incursion.

If you think you have seen pond apple, contact the weeds officer from the relevant agency in your area, or contact:

Craig Magnussen

National WoNS Coordinator – Hymenachne/Pond apple
Biosecurity Queensland
Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
LMB 17, Warwick Qld 4370
Phone: (07) 4661 6612
Fax: (07) 4661 6666
Email: craig.magnussen@deedi.qld.gov.au
Mobile: 0428 104 961
Web: www.deedi.qld.gov.au

For more information about hymenachne and pond apple visit www.weeds.org.au



Northern
Territory
Government

greening the
Territory

A Territory Government initiative

Pond apple weed alert

Pond apple (*Annona glabra*) has recently been found in Darwin's rural area. Landholders are urged to keep watch for this weed.

Pond apple is a declared weed in the NT and is a Weed of National Significance. It poses a serious threat to Top End wetlands, mangroves, creeks and river systems due to its tolerance of salt water and ability to grow in water logged soils.

The area potentially suitable for establishment of pond apple in the NT is not measured but is considered to be very large.

Have you seen pond apple?

Do not attempt to control or dispose of pond apple.
Contact the Weed Management Branch immediately on:

Ph: 8999 4567

Email: weedinfo.nretas@nt.gov.au

Web: www.nt.gov.au/weeds



www.greeningnt.nt.gov.au

The next evolution for WoNS

The Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) Program is having a face lift. After nearly 10 years of operation, this revolutionary program will be reworked and remodelled to make sure it compliments the current NRM landscape and to allow the listing of new species.

An Australian Weeds Committee review in late 2009 highlighted the significant contribution the WoNS Program has made to weed management in Australia including the management of outlying infestations, development and implementation of best practice and strategic management tools, and an enhancement of general weed awareness that has had flow-on benefits to other weed management sectors.

In recognition of the progress that has been made since the program's instigation in 2001, the review also recommended the redevelopment of national strategies and the introduction of a phasing system. This phasing system (broken into three stages) will enable new species to be introduced once strategic objectives for existing WoNS have been achieved. This will ensure that existing resources (coordinator time and investment) are redistributed to areas where they are most needed.

New weed species nominations (submitted by all states and territories in October 2010) are currently being assessed by the Bureau of Rural Sciences to determine which meet the criteria for WoNS status. Rankings are based on the level of invasiveness, potential for spread and socioeconomic and environmental impacts. It is expected that between 10 and 12 new weed species will be added to the list by July 2011.

Strategic plans for existing WoNS are currently being redeveloped by coordinators and their National Management Groups, with a targeted consultation process planned for late 2010 and early 2011.

Kym Johnson - National Lantana Coordinator

Ph: +61 7 3362 9627

Mob: 0450 613 730



Hymenachne invading the Moonie River

What is WoNS?

The WoNS Program is Australia's first truly national approach to reducing the impact of wide spread invasive plants. Its aim is to provide a consistent, cross-jurisdictional and strategic approach to the management of Australia's 20 most serious production and environmental weeds.

The program provides land managers with the tools and knowledge to effectively tackle this threat; including the collation of mapping data, development of best practice management tools, delivery of education and awareness training and the facilitation of research to support the program.

For more information on the WoNS Program, visit the Weeds Australia website at www.weeds.org.au/WoNS.



Prickly acacia flowers



Rubber vine



Parkinsonia flowers

Photos: Biosecurity Queensland

Community combats harrisia cactus

Harrisia cactus (*Harrisia martinii*), a popular pot plant of the 1980s, has now become a monumental weed. One of the areas most affected is the Mitchell district, where harrisia cactus now infests an estimated 6800 ha. It is a native of South America and has long, spiny, fleshy stems which bear red fruit containing large quantities of seed. It is also a vegetative reproducer; dropping segments which root and form new plants. The plant, also known as moonlight cactus as it flowers during the night, produces large pink flowers with a white tinge.

Dense infestations choke out pasture, reduce stocking capacity and create problems with access. The cactus is spread by animals, in particular birds that eat the fruit. It is also known to be spread by pigs, emus and wallabies.

Mitchell and District Landcare was successful in receiving funding from the Federal Government's Caring for our Country community action grants program. They are now coordinating a landscape-scale control incentive program with support from the Queensland Murray Darling Committee (QMDC).



Merve Phillips, a landholder from north of Mitchell, inspecting some harrisia cactus he has poisoned as a part of the incentive project. Photo: L. Fiedler

More than 15 properties are participating in the program which includes an education and awareness workshop to discuss identification and management techniques. Funding to carry out works has been provided on a 70/30 ratio basis, with land managers contributing 70 per cent towards the works on their properties. The QMDC Aboriginal ranger program has also been working alongside land managers and the local Maranoa Regional Council to control some of the more extensive infestations.

The federal funding has given the program the motivation it needed to get started. Planning has already begun for coordination of future management to ensure this investment is going to achieve long-term outcomes. The goals are to contain and prevent further spread of harrisia cactus.

Lavinia Fiedler

Weed & Pest Animal Technical Officer
Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Inc.

Mexican feather grass— flowering now!

Mexican feather grass (*Nassella tenuissima*) is now flowering so please keep an eye out for it in your area. If you see a grass that you think may be Mexican feather grass, please do not disturb it. Report the location as accurately as possible to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

For more information visit the Primary Industries home page on the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation website at www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4790_8943.htm.

Natives before neem trees

The neem tree has been promoted and planted in north-west Queensland for its fast growth and shade canopy. However, residents in the small town of Cloncurry are concerned the tree is spreading unhindered along the banks of the Cloncurry River and threatening native flora and fauna.



Neem tree: The dense evergreen foliage of the neem tree made it a popular shade species, but those same characteristics can choke out native species. Photo: N. March

A native of India, the neem tree produces an estimated 44 000–200 000 seeds each year. These seeds are widely spread by birds and the resulting seedlings generally thrive in the north-west climate.



Neem tree leaves and flowers. The annual seed production of a neem tree can number more than 200 000. Photo: N. March

Recent weed risk assessments suggest the neem tree has the potential to become much more abundant and widespread in Queensland. Areas at highest risk of invasion are the sandy bed and banks of watercourses

in seasonally dry tropical savannahs. If permitted to spread, dense stands of neem trees could displace native vegetation and reduce the productivity of grazing land.

Residents should consider removing neem trees from their gardens and planting natives instead. There are many wonderful native species and local nurseries have plenty of advice on what grows best in the region. While it may seem a convenient choice, planting a neem tree could come at a very high price to the environment and primary production.

For more information on neem trees, visit www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

Tiffany Daley
Biosecurity Queensland

Tropical soda apple (*Solanum viarum*)

Here is a weed alert from north coast of New South Wales:

Tropical soda apple is a new incursion to the NSW North Coast and we are seeking your assistance in spreading the alert (not the weed).

We're particularly keen to hear about any incursions in Queensland and how it could have spread (likely through stock movements with recent infestations identified in saleyards). Contact Kathy Stephens at the contact details at the end of this newsletter if you see any.

Tropical soda apple has been found in the Macleay catchment recently, about 100 km length area, with 50 hectares of scattered infestation. This is the first real known occurrence of this species in Australia. It is a federal noxious weed in the USA. It was thought to only be in the Kempsey area but we have now found plants near Grafton, Coffs Harbour, Macksville and Taree. Several plants have been found at regional sale yards. So could you all check your cattle sale yards, abattoirs, and other areas where cattle may be transported to and from.

Tropical soda apple has a medium sized (two to three centimetres in diameter) attractive fruit that cattle and feral animals eat and transport in their dung. Information on the species from NSW is given below. It is likely this species will be declared a Class 2 or 3 noxious weed in NSW during the next few months.

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/profiles/tropical-soda-apple>.

Breaking news: the first Queensland record of this species has recently been reported from a cattle holding yard in the Brisbane Valley.

Two varieties of **Zornia latifolia* naturalised in Queensland

**Zornia latifolia* Sm. is a prostrate perennial multi-branched creeper, forming a dense cover. The leaves each have two leaflets which are hairless or minutely hairy and slightly fleshy in appearance, the lower leaves are much broader than the upper ones. The elongated flower spike has overlapping bracts and yellow flowers followed by narrow pods with two to eight jointed segments each two to three millimetres long and wide and covered in minute bristles (FAO, 2010; Mohlenbrock, 1961).

Zornia latifolia is a native of South America, and newly recognised as naturalised in Queensland. It is the only naturalised *Zornia* species in Australia. It was previously listed in Holland & Pedley (2007) as *Zornia* sp. (Tully C.H. Middleton AQ220876). It is distinguished from all of the native species by the narrow linear overlapping bracts on the inflorescence, the bracts are less than two millimetres wide. It is most similar in appearance to *Zornia dyctiocarpa* DC. but this native species has wider, more separated bracts.

Two varieties are described by Mohlenbrock (1961) and both are naturalised in Queensland. **Zornia latifolia* Sm. var. *latifolia* has ovate to elliptic leaves and is known to be naturalised at Paradise Point and Coolangatta where it grows on roadside verge. **Zornia latifolia* var. *bernardinensis* (Chodat & Hassl.) Mohlenbr. has longer lanceolate leaves and is naturalised in north Queensland in the Mission Beach area, and was recently recorded in a caravan park in North Mackay (Queensland Herbarium, 2010).

**Z. latifolia* var. *bernardinensis*, was originally introduced into Queensland as a potential pasture species and grown at Tully (Queensland Herbarium, 2010). **Z. latifolia* var. *latifolia* has been separately introduced on the Gold Coast, from an unknown source. It is currently considered to be a minor weed in west Africa (FAO, 2010)

Ailsa Holland

Department of Environment and Resource Management

References

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) (2010). *Zornia latifolia*, Grassland Species Profiles. CIAT/FAO collaboration on Tropical Forages Profiles. <http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPC/doc/gbase/data/Pf000094.HTM>

Holland, A.E. & Pedley, L. (2007). Fabaceae, in Bostock, P.D. & Holland, A.E. (eds) *Census of the Queensland Flora 2007*, Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland.

Mohlenbrock, R. H. (1961). A monograph of the leguminous genus *Zornia*. *Webbia* 16:1–141.

Queensland Herbarium (2010), specimen label information, viewed 20 Oct 2010.

Some new records to November 2010

Supplied by the Queensland Herbarium

**Schizachyrium microstachyum* (Desv. ex Ham.)

Roseng., B.R.Arill. & Izag.

Status: Not listed, spreading in the south-east

collector: F. Collier

date: 15/3/2010

location: Burbank, Brisbane

**Sporobolus fertilis* (Steud.) Clayton

Class 2

collector: K. R. McDonald, R. Jensen, E. Mulder

date: 21/03/2010

location: McLeod River, Mt Lewis N.P

**Hymenachne amplexicaulis* ((Rudge) Nees

Class 2 plant; WONS

collector: N. Hooker

date: 29th April 2010

location: Townsville

**Brillantaisia lamium* (Nees) Benth.

Priority Sleeper Weed

Collector: S. McKenna

date: 22nd April 2010

location: Babinda

**Acacia* sp. close to **Acacia pringlei* Rose

Class 1

collector: J. Vitelli

date: 17/8/10

location: Cairns.

**Sporobolus africanus* (Poir.) Robyns & Tournay

Class 2, range extension

Collector: Hugh Stone

date: Oct 2010

location: Drillham

**Pithecellobium dulce* (Roxb.) Benth.

Class 1

collector: J. Vitelli

date: 17/8/10

location: Cairns

Contact details—regional coordinators

Cairns, Atherton and Cape York

Stephen McKenna
Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS)
Ph: (07) 4030 7800
Email: Stephen.mckenna@aqis.gov.au

Cloncurry (and Mt Isa, Gulf catchments)

Tiffany Daley
Biosecurity Queensland
Mob: 0488 423 539
Email: Tiffany.daley@deedi.qld.gov.au

Gympie (and Sunshine Coast)

Ernie Rider
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Ph: (07) 5482 2801
Mob: 0427 363 138
Email: ernest.rider@derm.qld.gov.au

Hervey Bay (and Fraser Coast)

Juliet Musgrave
Fraser Coast Regional Council
Ph: (07) 4197 4470
Mob: 0409 891 072
Email: Juliet.musgrave@frasercoast.qld.gov.au

Roma (and St George, Goondiwindi, Dalby, Toowoomba, Warwick)

Lavinnia Fiedler
Queensland Murray-Darling Committee
Ph: (07) 4620 4610
Mob: 0428 737 995
Email: lavinniaf@qmdc.org.au

Townsville

Nanette Hooker
James Cook University
Ph: (07) 4781 4574
Mob: 0439 410 772
Email: nanette.hooker@jcu.edu.au

Weed Spotters Queensland Network coordinator

Kathy Stephens
Queensland Herbarium
Ph: (07) 3896 9316
Mob: 0428 756 620
Email: kathy.stephens@derm.qld.gov.au

If you would like to become a regional coordinator for your area, please contact Kathy Stephens.