

Weeds Awareness News

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Major print campaign launched

The Australian Government has now launched a six-month print advertising campaign to raise awareness about invasive garden plants among gardeners

The campaign, launched on 19 September 2007 at Canberra's Parliament House, is part of the Australian Government's Community and Industry Engagement Plan. A total of \$4 million has been devoted to implement this plan from the Defeating the Weeds Menace program.

This campaign calls for gardeners across Australia to be responsible for the plants they grow, to properly manage garden waste and to prevent invasive plants spreading into the environment.

National Weeds Awareness Coordinator Andrew Clark said the invasion of garden plants into the environment is putting Australia's unique biodiversity at risk.

"While many of potentially invasive plants are still available for sale, there is a need for gardeners to voluntarily take action to stop further escapes," he said.

"It's no secret that 65% of Australia's invasive weed species were first planted in gardens, so experienced and inexperienced gardeners alike need to be more aware of the kinds of species

that are likely to escape into the bush," he said.

Each of the five weeds depicted in the advertisement (see reverse) are common problems in specific regions of Australia and will be familiar to both experienced and inexperienced gardeners.

The print advertising in rural, regional and metropolitan newspapers plans to reach 92% of the target audience with up to eight viewings each and will direct people to a new Australian Government web site www.weeds.gov.au.

In addition there is a planned editorial campaign to include feature stories with magazines and newsletters.

Weeds professionals and the nursery and garden industry will play a pivotal role in providing region specific advice to the enquiries about potential invasive species. It is expected that state agencies, regions, local government and retail garden centres should be prepared for additional enquiries about invasive garden plants.

Fliers, posters and bookmarks have been produced to help the professional weeds community deliver these messages to key audiences

The campaign was launch by Better Homes and Gardens' Graham Ross and Assistant Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, John Cobb.

New Australian Government web site

A new web site is part of a national effort to highlight the problem of invasive plants and to help prevent their spread into the environment.

The site will help the public understand more about key weeds issues and identify key gardening plants that are potentially invasive.

A database of 153 species (planned to increase to 450 species) will assist residents to identify invasive plants that are a problem in their area.

Key information and publications on weeds and the 20 Weeds of National Significance can be found here.

The website is www.weeds.gov.au.

Did you know:

- That 65% of weed species in Australia were first introduced as ornamental garden plants?

Contact the editor

If something is happening in your area to raise awareness of weeds, let me know.

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To subscribe or unsubscribe from this newsletter, please contact Andrew Clark at the above email address.

Future editions of this newsletter will be placed on the website at www.weeds.org.au.

Can you pick the environmentally damaging weed?

If you plant them in the wrong area, they all are.



That's why it's critically important that you check your plants.

You see, one of the problems with weeds is that what is perfectly safe to plant in one area of Australia, can be an environmental disaster in another. Go to www.australia.gov.au/weeds to find out which plants are weeds in your area.

Most weeds begin as ordinary plants in ordinary gardens like yours. Scary isn't it?

They escape from gardens like yours and are spread vast distances by things like cars, wind, animals and storm water drains, even by your shoes. So, invasive plants are very difficult for even an experienced gardener to control.

Weeds from gardens like yours are destroying native habitats, threatening species, choking rivers and costing us all dearly. They even make our food more expensive by costing farmers over \$4 billion a year.

Take another look at your garden because your actions are vital in defeating the weed menace.

- Choose appropriate plants for your area.
- Check existing garden plants are safe.
- Remove unsafe plants.
- Dispose of garden waste carefully.
- Be careful not to spread weeds.

Find out more at the website below.



Australian Government

WEED ? Check your plants

Go to www.australia.gov.au/weeds or ask your local garden retailer



Register activities at www.weedbusters.info and receive a free T-shirt from your state coordinator.

Weedbusters gearing up for 6-13th October

The Weedbuster 2007 campaign is being supported by the nursery and gardening industry in its theme "Grow Me Instead".

The Nursery and Gardening Industry of Australia and Sustainable Gardening Australia are both supportive of the objectives of Weedbuster.

For the eleventh time Weedbuster is gearing up. Activities are being hosted around Australia by individuals, schools, governments and community groups to help raise awareness of the damaging effects of invasive plants, by undertaking weed clean-up efforts, field days, demonstrations and displays.

A range of information, advice and promotional items are available from State Weedbuster Coordinators to assist people in delivering their activities. Activities can be registered at the national Weedbuster website.

Contact details of the State Weedbuster Coordinators can also be found at www.weedbusters.info.

Feedback about the 2007 campaign and suggestions for future campaigns would be appreciated.

Weedbusters is an initiative of the Australian Weeds Committee and the state and federal agencies it represents.