

Happy Valley Weeding Trip: 4th - 11th November 2016

Volunteers:

Peter Shooter - Nambour
Chris Breitenbach - Auchenflower
Rhonda Wood - Fairfield
Graeme Wood - Fairfield
Jane Minor - Alexandra Headland
Pat Turner - Montville

Abrus precatorius subspecies Africanus

Since March 2014 the groups I have lead have focused on eliminating the exotic weed *Abrus precatorius subspecies Africanus* from in and around Happy Valley.

When this program commenced, this subspecies was well established throughout the village, and to the North, West and South of the village. Infestation levels varied ranging from up to 80 - 90 percent ground cover in some areas to low levels, especially at the extent of the range. In most areas it had extended into the canopy of trees, where it seeded profusely.

Two and a half years later, the population in the areas we have been able to access is now very low. It is less than 1% of the March 2014 level, when the eradication program began. Follow up will involve periodic inspection and spot spraying. Most of these areas now have no adult plants and as a result there will be practically no seed set this coming season. Residual seeds in the soil will continue to germinate, necessitating ongoing follow up.

The area between Yidney Bypass road and the beach is the exception. This is the only area I am aware of where there is still quite a residual population. This trip we did extensive search and foliage spray in this area, as well as seed collection. We will be following up in this area throughout 2017.

This trip we inspected most of the other areas we had previously worked in and did spot spraying with 1.5% roundup as foliage spray. Infestation was extremely light. Where ever we found seed, we collected it.

One previously undiscovered outbreak was found approximately 0.7km out from the dump corner, on the left hand side of the road heading North West. There was a large amount of seed, which we collected before applying foliage spray. This area will be followed up in February.

Photo Points: I have ceased taking photos at the two photo points established at the commencement of the eradication program. There is no *Abrus* remaining in these areas.

I established a new reference photo point in this area North West of the dump corner, where an outbreak was discovered this trip.

Flowering: Mature plants had just commenced flowering this trip. In the main, last year's seed was still attached to the seed heads. Some seeds remained attached from the previous year.

Seed germination trial

No information has been found in the literature about seed germination for the species.

In March 2016 a trial was started with 1000 seeds planted in sandy soil at Boreen Point. This is similar to Happy Valley soil. No artificial watering is applied.

In the first month, 14.9% germinated. This increased slowly to a total of 19.8% at the end of November. The last 2 months, which was very dry, saw no germination. We await with interest the coming of the next wet season.

Lantana camara(Lantana) and Senna Pendula (Easter Cassia)

These two species were worked on extensively this trip. The focus area was between Yidney Rocks Bypass Road and the beach. Large areas of this section are massively infected by these two species. In some areas the infestation is so dense that passage through it is extremely difficult.

Eliminating Lantana and Easter Cassia in this area is a huge task and will take many trips to make a meaningful impact. This process will also make the area more assessable, and make the detection of remaining Abrus infestations much easier.

Method:

Small plants were pulled by hand. Larger plants were cut at close to ground level and the exposed cut surface squirted with 100% roundup. Cutting was done with either a small electric chain saw or long handled levered cutters.

2017 Program.

4 trips are programmed for 2017 follows:

February 5th to 11th

May 14th to 20th

August 6th to 12th

November 19th to 25th

2017 will see a focus on Lantana and Easter Cassia, with ongoing detection and mopping up of remaining and emergent Abrus.

The February trip will focus on two areas – East of the Yidney Rocks bypass road and the second valley north of the dingo fence.

Peter Shooter