

# Uncle Dave, the Easter Cassia Warrior

## A Children's Story on Weeds by John Sinclair

John was very sad when his parents advised him that they had to urgently fly to England because his grandmother was very ill. However he cheered up when his parents then told him that while they were away, Uncle Dave would look after him on Fraser Island (K'gari). John cheered up because he loved his Uncle Dave and he loved Fraser Island. While he would miss his parents, he knew that Uncle Dave would help cure his sadness while they were tending to his sick grandmother.

Uncle Dave came down to see John's parents off at the airport. He then drove John up to Fraser Island in his big four-wheel drive. On the way, Uncle Dave told him about his latest adventures on Fraser Island (K'gari) when he had joined lots of weed-busters on a big Easter Cassia Blitz.

*"Why would you want to get rid of Easter Cassia? They have such pretty flowers. Our neighbour has one in her garden,"* exclaimed John.

*"The problem is that Easter Cassias also have lots and lots of seeds and the birds eat the seeds. When the birds fly away from the gardens, they pass the seeds out in their poo. Soon Easter Cassias start coming up all over the place,"* answered Uncle Dave. *"It wouldn't be so bad in the city where people are looking after their gardens and remove unwanted Easter Cassia seedlings, but on K'gari the towns are small and the seeds soon spread into the surrounding bush where nobody sees them until they grow into very big trees and their flowers are soon visible above the canopy. That was what happened at Happy Valley. For a while every autumn the bush around Happy Valley became a sea of yellow. That was until this year when a group of weed-busters organized an Easter Cassia Blitz and spent a week cutting down every Easter Cassia plant they could find."* Uncle Dave added.

As they continued driving, Uncle Dave described his adventures with the weed-busters and how the weed-busters had to sometimes wriggle on their bellies to reach the bottom of the Cassia to cut it off at the stump and then paste it with a special hormone to kill the roots. John was very entertained. He thought what hard work it must have been but it must have been very exciting. Certainly Uncle David was very impressed by how much the weed-busters had accomplished during the week.

Now that his attention had been drawn to how widespread Easter Cassia had become, as they drove towards K'gari, John couldn't help noticing how many Easter Cassias were lining the road. He stopped seeing the plant as covered with pretty yellow flowers and started thinking of it as an unwelcome weed that was spreading seeds far and wide.

When he had settled in with Uncle Dave and Aunt Marion at Eurong, John started exploring the small village with them. During their morning walks, Aunt Marion would point out all of the different weeds growing in the various yards.

*"Fraser Island (K'gari) is a World Heritage site and we have to stop these weeds spreading outside our villages*

*and into the bush where they are hard to find and deal with,"* Aunt Marion explained.

As he explored, John noticed a few Easter Cassia in a swamp on the edge of Eurong that the weed-busters had missed. He told Uncle David about it. That is when he saw his gentle Uncle Dave transform into an Easter Cassia Warrior, the way that Batman and Robin changed from mere mortals into super heroes. As he put on his boots and a special tool belt with his trusty folding saw and his jar of hormone and other useful tools, Uncle Dave was transformed before setting out to remove these pretty but invasive monsters.



When they saw the display of yellow flowers, Uncle Dave plunged into the swamp. He seemed to take giant strides over the thick vegetation pushing it down and making a track for John to follow. He took no notice that their boots were full of water when they reached the first yellow flower burst. Then the Easter Cassia Warrior crawled on his hands and knees throwing away any undergrowth stopping him to access the base of the cassia flowering far overhead. He ignored the water as he sawed through the trunk and covered the stump with hormone to stop it from regrowing. He then pushed through the tangles of plants to deal with every cassia one after another until they could see no more Easter Cassia flowers in the swamp.

John was most impressed and went home and wrote an Email to his school mates saying, *"Uncle Dave is my Super Hero. You should see him in action. The only difference between him and Clark Kent is that he doesn't need to change into a Superman costume."*

