

Diary for Eurong Weed Management Maintenance. 14th to 19th May 2017

Summary: Su Dawson and John Sinclair dealt with the lush growth of weeds mainly germinated from seed since the last Eurong working bee,. The weed growth was so prodigious that in the time with the resources available this needed to be dealt with almost exclusively by spraying. In the four fine days over 250 litres of glyphosate was dispersed in the Resort Valley part of Eurong and then mainly on the northern (Easton Street side of the resort).



Greywater irrigation and 550 mm of rain produced a weed explosion both sides of Eurong's northern dingo fence in the two months since 18th March.

Sunday 14th May

Leaving Brisbane at 8.00 we arrived at Eurong at about 1.30 pm. After late lunch we set off on an inspection of the area which has had almost regular and generous rain since we were here in March including a deluge from ex-cyclone Debbie. Since the last working bee concluded on 18 March (57 days ago) more than **550 mm** has been recorded in the Eurong rain gauge. The rain greatly benefitted over 200 plants placed in the ground in mid March. Very few have not survived and all now seem well established and able to cope without supplementary watering. The constant rain has also stimulated the weed germination and growth producing a green carpet of weeds in area previously clean.

The volume of weeds was strong evidence of just how essential that there should be more regular weed maintenance programs for the townships particularly after a good season. Without our timely attention this week the Eurong program might revert to Square 1. Luckily almost none of the weeds had quite reached the seeding stage. Thus by judicious spraying we were determined to prevent this lush crop of weeds setting seed and hopefully we can on our next working bee in July build on the gains previously made without having to do the same work repeatedly. The problem was that there had been showers earlier in the day and the weather forecasts were predicting heavy rain on Wednesday that only guaranteed us two reliably fine days to do a massive amount of spraying.

Monday, 15th May

With a weather forecast is for only two fine days, we made a very early start to take advantage of a golden day. The main target area was where there had been prolific weed growth as a result of irrigation with grey-water. Much of the early 5.30 am start was negated by the very heavy dew. We worked on manual weeding until 9.30 am and were then about to begin spraying the sprinkler system sprung into action in the very areas we were planning to spray in. We discussed this frustration, had morning tea and waited for the impact of that irrigation to dry off. In the meantime we worked on spraying from Problem Corner back towards the generator. Also sprayed was the area along Easton Street inside the Dingo fence that wasn't affected by the grey water irrigation.

About 12.00 we began spraying weeds in the road area outside the Dingo Fence. We had just discharged 30 litres of Roundup on the target area and target weeds when the irrigation system again came on and inexplicably washed out all of the 30 litres and backbreaking spraying. The suite of weeds encountered especially in the irrigation zone has changed a little. There is now a cocktail of luxuriant weeds that are thriving with the regular sprayed with nutrient enriched water. Glossy nightshade that once dominated this zone has been largely replaced by a rich mix of previously little seen soft weeds. There are at least 22 weed species now occurring in this zone, mostly on the outside of the fence. While many of the old culprits remained, particularly Brazilian Nightshade, the area is now dominated by thickhead, milk thistle and flatweed.

Coral Creeper is still thriving outside the dingo fence despite the previous treatment in February and March. There was significant knockback in the irrigation zone and any emerging seedlings were sprayed, When sprayed in February and March the conditions were extremely dry especially those parts not receiving grey-water. There was not much uptake of the chemical. However since then there has been good and constant rain to rejuvenate the Coral Creeper and this is going to be an ongoing challenge. there has been a great resurgence beyond the irrigation zone.

Despite the frustrations we still managed pumped out a lot of spray about 100 litres of glyphosate even if some of it was washed off

After a day of heavy lifting both of us felt like Ole Man River — *"bodies all aching and racked with pain"*. We slept well until the cramps woke us early

Tuesday, 16th May

The day dawned fine and clear. While waiting for the dew to dry off, Su worked on the Roundabout and nearby areas and John Sinclair went down to Problem corner which had early sun and sprayed out 20 litres of glyphosate mainly Green Panic start at Problem Corner and reaching up to near the effluent tanks and then a strip from the bus-wash to the roundabout.

Our work on the main target area outside the northern dingo fence in the grey-water area was stalled as we waited for a volunteer who is scheduled to join the Happy Valley group to show up.

We had been assured that the irrigation of grey water along the north-side dingo fence was disabled but alas as we were about to resume spraying the sprinklers sprang to life. With a quick phone call they were disabled and we pumped out more than 60 litres until a late lunch and then another 60 litres after lunch. However just as we completed work for the day at about 5.00 pm the sprinkler briefly came on again. The area sprayed was mainly along the road because we now realize that since the dingo fence is regularly patrolled by QPWS vehicles there is a possibility that these vehicles are collecting seed in the under-carriage from the luxuriant and tall weeds and dispersing them through the National Park. We saw two QPWS vehicles drive along the fence in two days (Four passes). Thus we have resolved to spray the width of the track for all exotic weeds as well as the side areas.

Wednesday, 17th May

Despite the predictions of rain and it was a fine sunny day. There were no distractions from the job at hand which focussed heavily on spraying as many weeds as possible with glyphosate. The weather held and the sprinklers did not come on. While waiting for the vegetation to dry off enough to spray John Sinclair went to the QPWS Office to discuss various matters including planning for the next working bee in July. He then returned to batch up more mixes of glyphosate ready for spraying

We continued spraying weed to the eastern end of the irrigation zone the outside of the fence pumping out another 50 litres while inside the fence Su was equally busy dispensing a similar amount before lunch all between Easton Street and the Dingo fence

After lunch John Sinclair reluctantly returned and did another 20 litres but this time targeting Coral Creeper on the hillside above the reach of the Irrigation while Su turned her attention to the area adjacent to the

Meanwhile inside the fence Sue was dispensing the chemicals at the same rate and by the end of the day we had dispersed over 110 litres of glyphosate. It was another day when we were reminded of bodies *all aching and racked with pain* but it was with good fortune that there was no lost effort as a result of any unscheduled switching on of the automated irrigation system

Thursday, 18th May

Despite the ominous forecasts it hasn't rained yet and seem that it might hold off until tonight. While F.L thought that he never wanted to dome a backpack again he did and dispensed another 15 litres and with Su close the gap along the road on the south side of the Resort. All of the section from the roundabout to Problem Corner has been sprayed mainly targeting Green Panic and Coral Creeper. The spray program didn't reach to the top of the steep slope which needs to be attacked from above

Su pumped out 40 litres glyphosate inside the Dingo fence to stop the germinates becoming established inside her declared green zone.

It was also a day for catching up and consulting other collaborators in our project. We consulted with the Assistant Resort Manager, Magnus about progress and planning options for future working bees in Eurong. We were also able to catch up with Juliet Musgrave and Andrew Hatch who were coincidentally carrying out Council weed control in both Happy Valley and Eurong during the week as well as cooperating in the Bitou Bush survey being undertaken by Biosecurity Queensland.

At the QPWS Eurong office John Sinclair was able to catch up with Ross Belcher and also discuss the plans to extend the bench space of the nursery Kim Fleischfresser and discuss the transport of supplies from Hervey Bay Bunnings. Some pipes will be too long for the QPWS truck and we will need to get Fraser Island Transport to bring these. Kim was going to explore the issue of nozzles for the overhead sprays.

At the end of a long day after fixing some signs on the new gardens at the resort attention was turned to the Residential valley where we finally caught up with David and Marion Anderson just as the rain began sprinkling.

Friday, 19th May

There had been little rain during the night but as we loaded up it became steadier. As we headed down the beach it was so heavy that we found it had to define the safe part of the beach to drive on and so we diverted to the inland road which was awash. We were back in Brisbane at 2.00 pm.

Some tasks for Eurong 15th 22nd July Working Bee

- Carrying out extensions to increase the bench space in the Eurong Nursery
- Landscaping the Happy Valley dump using plants from the Eurong nursery
- Maintaining and developing landscaping at the Eurong Resort
- Maintenance of the Walking Track
- Refurbishment of the Sign shelter
- More spraying work outside the northern dingo fence
- Clearing up the Easter Cassia near Problem Corner,
- Dealing with Mother of Millions etc in Singapore Alley