

‘Sharing’ Problem Plants

The ECan Biosecurity team has recently expressed concern about the “sharing” of some regionally restricted garden plant species. While garden centres and nurseries are checked annually and any identified listed Restricted Plants are destroyed, it is apparent that some weedy species are still being actively circulated within the community.

It is likely that most people consider some plants quite harmless and have no qualms about passing them on to friends or neighbours, however there are a number of plants identified as Restricted Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS). If a plant is classified as Restricted its usually because it has been identified as a potential threat to the agricultural or native landscape (as it has exhibited weedy tendencies either within Canterbury or elsewhere). Even if planted in the garden, it has the potential to jump the fence and threaten natural ecosystems and production. Therefore it is an offence under the Biosecurity Act to sell, propagate or distribute any plant species that is classified as a Restricted Pest.

A number of familiar plants presently listed as Restricted – buddleja (*Buddleja davidii*), artillery/aluminium plant (*Galeobdolon luteum*), Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*) and German ivy (*Senecio milkaniodes*) – are just a few of a long list. Gardeners are not required to remove Restricted Plants present in their gardens but are urged to dispose of any vegetation responsibly such as at the greens area of your local land fill, NOT in riverbeds or farm dump sites as it increases the chance of these plants further establishing in native or productive communities.

A good example of how Restricted Plants are easily spread in the community was brought up by the owner of a garden centre recently. He received a call from a member of public asking if he stocked Mexican daisy or artillery/aluminium plant. He explained that these were Restricted Plants and it was illegal for him to sell them. Unconcerned the woman said that she would get some cuttings of these plants from a friend or her old garden and re-plant them at her new property. If anyone has tried to control Artillery plant they will know how hard it is to kill in a garden setting let alone if it escapes into the wild. It is important to understand that these plants wear the restricted tag for a reason and although they may not show too many weedy tendencies in a controlled garden, they can, in a suitable environment, become a real nuisance and extremely difficult and costly to control.

Gardeners can make a difference by identifying and preventing further circulation of problem plants. For information on Restricted Plants and how to control them please contact a Biosecurity Officer at Amberley, or Cheviot who will be willing to help.



Coordinate your rabbit control work



Recently appointed ‘Rabbit Coordinator’ Steve Palmer (Airon Pest Solutions Ltd) has bought a wealth of animal pest management experience to the community. The Rabbit Coordinator position was created by Environment Canterbury in 2007 and is an advisory and coordination role. It fills a need, recognised

by land occupiers and Pest Management Liaison Committees throughout the region, as rabbit numbers on prone country soar towards pre-RHD levels and traditional control methods are required to get numbers back to acceptable levels.

Steve has been working with seven groups throughout the region and with Land Information NZ who are responsible for pest control in many of the riverbeds in Canterbury.

With over 22 years’ experience in animal pest control Steve has a great deal of expertise in the planning and management of aerial work.

“In a Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) environment, any control method that kills potentially immune, adult rabbits is beneficial to a degree, but with immunity averaging between 50 and 70% controlling a low percentage of rabbits in the hope that RHD will take care of the rest is no longer a viable option,” Steve said.

“Effective rabbit control that will last indefinitely and obtain the best results from the cycles of RHD needs 95% of the population to be controlled in a short period of time. Piecemeal rabbit control spread over weeks or months will not keep ahead of breeding cycles and rabbit movement,” he said.

An increasing number of properties throughout Canterbury are reporting rabbit numbers well above the level that control work is required.

Committee's work invaluable

By Councillor Eugenie Sage, Pest and Biosecurity Portfolio chairperson



Congratulations to the recently elected members and chairperson of the Pest Management Liaison Committee (PMLC). The committee and its counterparts around the region advise Environment Canterbury (ECan) on how the Regional Pest Management Strategy, which

provides the framework for the control or eradication of listed animal and plant pests, is best implemented.

The committees also comment on ECan's annual budget for pest work and the level of targeted rate for their pest district, and liaise between rural landholders and the Council. The committees are elected every three years after the local body elections.

Highlights for the last 12 months include the continued decline in the number of cattle and deer herds infected with bovine Tb, to 14 in Canterbury in April. This is on track to achieve the 2013 goal of 0.2% infected herds or two herds in every thousand.

Despite strong representations from Environment Canterbury, the Animal Health Board (AHB) has decided to remove the management of vector control contracts from the regional council and take over this role itself. The 12 months until July 2009 will be a transition period. In 2008/09 ECan will continue to collect the 10% local share contribution

towards the cost of funding the AHB programme. It will consult further before deciding what arrangements should apply in 2009/10.

With rising levels of immunity to Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) in young rabbits, the 10-year control holiday may be ending. An estimated 26,000 ha in Canterbury now have rabbit numbers above the modified McLean scale level 3, the level where the Regional Pest Management Strategy requires that control be undertaken.

There has been a strong landholder response to increasing rabbit numbers. Aerial control operations in the Waiiau have been helped by Land Information NZ organising control in part of the riverbed. In North Canterbury, 38 properties were non-compliant in the year to 30 June 2008, but the Council has only had to start organising rabbit control itself (and recovering the costs from the landholder) for one property.

To help make the "user pays" regime more effective, Environment Canterbury will soon apply for a region wide resource consent for the use of 1080 impregnated baits to control rabbits, possums, and wallabies in identified areas. If granted, the consent could be used by contractors certified by ECan.

I am happy to be contacted and look forward to working with landholders and community interests on the most effective ways to control animal and weed pests.

Councillor Eugenie Sage Ph. 03 942 1251 or email: eugenie.sage@ecan.govt.nz

Rabbit levels on the rise

From the Canterbury Regional Rabbit Trends Report 2007

Rabbit numbers continue to increase in many areas of the Canterbury region. In the Amuri Pest District 52 property inspections to check rabbit levels have been carried out up to June 30 this year.

From these inspections 6 landowners have been issued with Notices of Direction requiring them to reduce rabbit levels on their land, making a total of 21 properties in the district currently under a Notice of Direction. One occupier has had an Action on Default issued and the required work has been carried out on his behalf.

The pest district has a considerable amount of historically rabbit-prone country. Much of Amuri provides an ideal habitat for rabbits. Their preferred habitat of free-draining soils, sunny faces and a moderate rainfall, is prevalent in much of North Canterbury.

The traditional rabbit control methods of patch poisoning, night shooting and fumigation are once again the chosen options as increasing immunity to RHD reduces the impact of the disease. These methods are quite successful on

low-level rabbit infestations and isolated pockets but co-ordinated poison programmes are required once numbers increase or the infestation becomes more widespread.

Farming communities are generally aware of the decreasing effectiveness of RHD and more and more individuals are carrying out traditional rabbit control, rather than pinning hopes on the possibility of a more effective disease outbreak next time around. This proactive approach is encouraged.

Higher levels of immunity to RHD and increasing rabbit numbers need to be addressed and in the "user pays" environment of pest control it is the responsibility of the land occupier to carry out this work. Discussion between neighbours will help occupiers to take a coordinated approach to control work to ensure that operations are effective and re-infestation from adjacent properties does not occur.

If you require further information or wish to discuss rabbit issues on your property please contact Biosecurity Team Leader Laurence Smith at the Amberley Office of Environment Canterbury. Ph 03 314 8014

Pay us an e-visit

Copies of all pest newsletters are available at www.ecan.govt.nz.

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Old Man's Beard



Old man's beard threatens areas of natural significance in North Canterbury at numerous sites around the countryside.

This season Environment Canterbury's biosecurity staff have inspected all rural sites throughout the Amuri Pest District, carried out some control work on single vines and asked occupiers to deal with more substantial infestations

A good number of the sites where this vine has been present in the past were checked; no sign of old man's beard was

<< *Old man's beard reaches for the sky. The weight of these aerial vines are breaking the supporting vegetation, destroying desirable trees and damaging flood protection.*

found because the property occupants have continued to control any seedlings or new growth that have appeared on old stumps. Landowners who have carried out control work in the past need to check the area regularly to ensure there is no regrowth or seedling strike, which requires attention.

When control work has been carried out it is imperative that cuttings are disposed of carefully. One look at Canterbury riverbeds shows what damage thoughtless dumping in these areas can do. Although there is a lot already in many riverbeds, old man's beard has not reached its potential spread. Mindless dumping will only speed up that spread and undermine the extensive control efforts carried out so far.

Vines that have been chopped off at the base can be left to break down in the trees that have supported them. Plant cuttings are best taken to an approved green waste facility where composting is carried out at the temperatures required to destroy even the hardiest of weed seed.

Good progress with Bovine Tb control

From the Tb Contracts Management Team

Excellent progress is being made with the control of Bovine Tb in the Amuri Pest District.

The 2007/08 possum control programme is almost complete with contracting companies achieving their contract specifications.

In the 2006/07 round up, 301 ferrets and 4554 possums were dispatched. The bulk of the possum numbers came from the control operations of the Hanmer Basin (1205), Organ Range (1150) and Parnassus (660).

In the 2007/08 round up, 567 ferrets and 5291 possums were dispatched. The bulk of the possums came from the Hanmer Basin (1524) and Parnassus (2671) operations. Both of these operations included areas which had not been previously controlled.

For the 2008/09 programme, the money available for Canterbury has reduced so the control programme is targeted specifically to our at risk areas. Not all operations require possum and ferret control every year because numbers are so low.

The 2008/09 control programme for the Amuri Pest District is:

Amuri Range	Targeted possum and ferret control
Dog Creek	Targeted ferret control
Domett	No control
Ethleton	No control
Glencoe	Complete possum control
Hanmer Basin	Complete possum control and targeted ferret control

Inland Road	No control
Inland Road West	No control
Intake	Targeted ferret control
Leader Valley	Targeted possum control
Lowry Cheviot	No control
Lowry Range	Complete possum control
Organ Range	Complete possum control and targeted ferret control
Pahau	Complete possum control
Parnassus	Targeted possum and ferret control
Rotherham	Targeted ferret control
Stanton	No control

Please note: Complete possum control indicates that the whole operation is being worked. Targeted possum control indicates that just parts are being worked.

Movement Control Herds (12-06-08) – Northern Region

	Cattle	Deer	District totals
<i>Kaikoura</i>	3	0	3
<i>Amuri</i>	3	1	4
<i>Waikari</i>	3	1	4
<i>Ashley</i>	1	0	1
Region totals	10	2	12

*Phillip Spencer
Northern Region Bovine Tb Contracts Manager*

Time to control your gorse and broom

Spring is a good time to control gorse and broom because plants are growing actively and take up the applied chemical more readily.

The aim of this work is to prevent gorse and broom from infesting land that is presently free of these two plant pests. This is achieved by preventing them from seeding.

Some basic guidelines to a successful control programme are:

Keep boundaries clear; nobody wants someone else's problem spreading onto their property especially one that can potentially be expensive to remedy. This should be the very first priority.

If the boundary fence is a hedge have it trimmed annually after flowering but before seed sets.

Focus on scattered plants and small patches; these are the biggest threat to the clear areas of properties. Controlling single plants and small patches is also much more cost-effective than waiting until they become block infestations and attempting to reclaim heavily infested areas.

Effort and money put into block infestations rather than scattered plants could result in scattered plants becoming block infestations.

Plan and work methodically across the property beginning with the least infested areas working back towards block infestations. Don't miss any plants that are of a seed producing size, and plan to carry out follow up work each season before seed sets. The less seed allowed into the soil the better.

If you would like assistance in developing a brush weed control programme for your property, a Biosecurity Officer at Environment Canterbury's Amberley or Cheviot Office will be able to assist and advise on the chemicals to use and the best time to apply them.



Control work is required on this broom flowering over a boundary fence onto a clean property.

Amuri Pest Management Liaison Committee

Hamish Roxburgh
(Chairperson)
Ph 03 315 6049

Paul Bush
Ph 03 319 2822

Hugh Northcote
Ph 03 315 6081

Peter Northcote
Ph 03 315 6010

Clem Small
Ph 03 315 6473

David Rutherford
Ph 03 315 8042

Duncan MacFarlane
Ph 03 315 6120

Ben Chaffey
Ph 03 315 6109

Representing your pest district

If you have an interest in pest management issues and would like to become a member of your Amuri committee please contact either Biosecurity Team Leader, Laurence Smith on Ph. 03 314 8014 or Amuri Pest Management Liaison Committee Chairperson, Hamish Roxburgh on Ph. 03 315 6049

Pests and Biosecurity Staff at Environment Canterbury

The Biosecurity Section is organised into three teams: Northern, Central and Southern. The Kaikoura, Amuri, Ashley and Waikari Pest Management Districts are in the Northern area.

The Northern Area Team Leader is Laurence Smith in Amberley. Amberley-based Biosecurity Officers are Jan Crooks, Peter Morgan, Lance Smith and Lindsay Scott. Leanne Lye is Biosecurity Support Officer for the Northern team, ph. 03 314 8014. The Cheviot Biosecurity Officers are Noel Crump and Tom Kirkwood, ph. 03 319 8614. The Kaikoura Biosecurity Officer is Peter Adams, ph. 03 319 7567.

Bovine Tb and Contracts Manager is Kevin Gallagher. He is responsible for managing the Tb vector control programme as part of the National Pest Management Strategy within Canterbury. He is based at the Christchurch office, ph. 03 363 9320. In the northern area Kevin is helped by Amberley-based Bovine TB Management Officer Phil Spencer, ph. 03 314 7034 or 027 437 4745.

Rabbit control coordinator, Steve Palmer is a contractor to Environment Canterbury, ph. 03 319 8400 or 027 348 5394, or email: airon@xtra.co.nz

The Biosecurity Manager, Timaru-based Graham Sullivan is responsible for implementing the Regional Pest Management Strategy, ph. 03 684 0535.

Pests and Biosecurity Portfolio Committee Chairperson is Cr Eugenie Sage, ph. 03 942 1251 or eugenie.sage@ecan.govt.nz