



Weedbusters!

www.weedbusters.org.nz

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October's Dirty Weekend events around the country have encouraged gardeners to make a difference without even leaving their own backyards.

Dirty Weekends go off with a bang!

Weedbusting events were held around New Zealand during October to encourage gardeners to clear weedy species from their backyards, and replace them with non-weedy alternatives.

Events ranged from free weed dumping at greenwaste facilities, to weed swaps where native plants were given out and static displays. The 'dispose of weed waste wisely' theme was used to educate participants.

There was a great response, and it looks like Weedbusters Dirty Weekends in October will become a regular event - bigger and better in 2008!



DOC staff at Kapiti get into the spirit of the event!

Waiheke winner's Naughty Nights



Andy Spence, Waiheke's ARC Park Ranger (left), with Naughty Nights winner Rae Gibb and Auckland City Council Parks Officer Gary Wilton. Photo: J. Reeve.

Waiheke residents were offered a chance to win a 'Naughty Nights' package at Auckland's City Life Hotel as part of the Weedbusters Dirty Weekend campaign.

Thirty-four residents entered the competition, which required that they take Andy Spence, ARC's Waiheke Park Ranger, on a guided tour of their garden so that he could identify weeds for them, and advise on control methods.

The 10 weeds most commonly identified were blue morning glory, tradescantia, moth plant, Japanese honeysuckle, nasturtium, pampas, jasmine, agapanthus, crassula, and black-eyed Suzy - all of which can be major weeds in natural areas.

**Working together
to protect New Zealand**

Holiday home horrors wrecking our coastline?

You see them all up and down the coastlines - holiday home gardens full of weedy species that grow like mad in urban gardens, but still get transplanted to holiday home gardens as well.

Maybe it's because they are so easy to propagate and grow, and are so hardy in the face of often harsh coastal conditions? The problem is that these are the same traits that make them a problem in holiday home gardens, where maintenance is likely to only happen once or twice a year. The rest of the time, these weeds are free to seed and spread into neighbouring dunes, hillsides, coastal cliffs, and bush.

Those with holiday homes need to take a good look over Christmas at what they are growing in their gardens; then, get rid of weedy species, and replace them with non-weedy plants that won't cause heartache and hard work for others to clear out of natural areas when the holidays are over.



Agapanthus (*Agapanthus praecox*)



Canna lily (*Canna species*)



Jasmine (*Jasminum polyanthum*)



Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*)

Dumping on a national icon



Cape honey flower (*Melianthus major*)

It's not just the growing of holiday home horrors that is the problem - it's what happens to them when the big cleanup, once or twice a year, comes around.

Many of the most troublesome coastal weeds, such as jasmine, canna lily and shrub balsam, grow easily from fragments of root and stem. Others, such as agapanthus and Formosa lily, spring up from discarded bulbs and seedheads.

Some people try to justify disposing of garden waste on sand-dunes, coastal areas and reserves, as stabilising these areas or beautifying them.

Others argue that greenwaste rots down with no ill-effects, ignoring the weeds that establish in these areas as a result.

Whichever way you look at it, dumping garden waste is just as bad as dumping household waste - and most holiday home owners wouldn't dream of doing that!

Top tips for holiday garden greenwaste

- Use a local contractor to take away your greenwaste and dispose of it properly
- Find out about local waste disposal facilities that will be open during holiday times, and use them
- If all else fails, take any parts of weedy plants that can reproduce (seedheads, bulbs, etc) back from holiday with you, and dispose of them with other garden waste at a local facility



In the thick of it...

Think global, act local is a catchphrase that has been captured by corporates from it's original use by environmental and human rights movements.

No matter how often you hear it, though, it neatly summarises a multitude of issues. By looking after our own backyards, we can help look after the planet. Even small efforts make a difference. You too can get involved.

This was the main theme of Weedbusters very first national Dirty Weekend campaign - get out there and make a difference for the environment by what you do in your own backyard. Events were run all over the country, and although they weren't swamped by people, there was enough response for the next stage in the spread of environmental messages to kick in.

Remember those old shampoo ads, 'and they told two friends, and they told two friends...'?

Humans are social animals and we talk to each other a lot about all sorts of things. Sometimes one of the most effective steps we can take in environmental education is to start the message off in such a way that it becomes part of everyday conversation amongst friends, family, co-workers and customers.

Hopefully all those people who had contact with enthusiastic weedbusters and their weeds message during October's dirty weekend events will pass this on to others they interact with in their everyday lives.

It is often said that talk is cheap, and that is true when no action comes of it. But when messages come from peoples' peers, they are more likely to take it on board and act on it.

So this holiday period, spread the word, not the weed - and start a chain reaction that will make a real difference!

Carolyn Lewis
National Weedbusters Coordinator

Murrays Bay Weedbusters write...

My class (Year 3) at Murrays Bay School in Auckland has been working on a project all year involving the first stage in getting rid of weeds in a 200-300 square metre area of our school. You name it, we had it: wild ginger, agapanthus, gorse, woolly nightshade, kikuyu, Japanese honeysuckle, mile-a-minute, elaeagnus, boneseed, monkey apple, pampas grass...the list goes on!

It has been a huge learning curve for the children (and me!), but we have worked through identifying the weeds, learning all about each one, clearing 200 square metres so far, and mulching it ready for replanting.

We have had a lot of support from both Kate Jackson (North Shore City Council Enviroschools Coordinator) and Su Sinclair (Auckland Regional Council's Weedbusters Coordinator), and Woody Weed even visited to cheer on our efforts.



Murray's Bay School students contemplate the Secret Garden pre-weedbusting efforts. Photo: T. Best.

The children are using their weedbusting experiences to develop web pages and other projects. Not bad for a Year 3 class - the children have all worked so hard all year towards this!
- Trish Best, Murrays Bay School

It's business time for Adopt-a-Verge

Waiheke businesses are taking up the Weedbusters challenge, by adopting areas of roadside where weeds have taken over, and transforming them into weedfree spaces.

While Auckland City Council maintains a strip closest to the roadside, neighbouring residents tend to take care of their verges outside their homes. Waiheke's 'adopt a verge' initiative gives businesses the

opportunity to provide TLC to otherwise 'ownerless' areas, and be involved in a worthwhile community project.

The first verges were adopted in May this year. Already there is a marked difference at the sites being looked after by I-Mech Machinery Ltd, Scapes, Quality Waiheke, and Angelwood Landscaping. Waiheke Forest and Bird have also adopted an area.

- Jenness Reeve, Waiheke Weedbusters



Jerry Wayne of I-Mech Machinery Limited and Woody Weed on Waiheke Island. Photo: J. Reeve

Weedbusters pinups for 2008

The Weedbusters calendar is back for 2008, featuring 12 delightful but destructive weed species, including strawberry dogwood (*Dendrobenthamia capitata*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and elaeagnus (*Elaeagnus reflexa*).

Copies can be purchased through Weedbusters at info@weedbusters.org.nz.

'Plant Me Instead' books popular

Following on from the highly successful Northland/Auckland and Wellington 'Plant Me Instead' books, Weedbusters initiated similar books for the Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast, Waikato, Canterbury/Otago, and Southland regions.

Weeds selected for inclusion were those causing concern to staff and volunteers working with weeds on the ground from a variety of organisations and groups.

Some of these weeds are already banned from sale, propagation and distribution nationally; others are required to be removed from properties under regional rules; yet others have no legal status but are still of concern to local weedbusters.

The non-weedy alternatives, both native and non-native, were chosen with input from nurseries and from weed assessment experts, and were screened against a variety of New Zealand and overseas databases to minimise risk of later weediness issues.

Further 'Plant Me Instead' books are being planned for Bay of Plenty and East Coast/Hawkes Bay.

Copies of the four new Plant Me Instead books are available free of charge from Weedbusters at info@weedbusters.org.nz.



DOC staff Penny Loomb and Ian Popay check out the Plant Me Instead books

Want to win a \$50 Gardening New Zealand gift card?

To go into the monthly draw to win a \$50 Gardening New Zealand gift card, enter the 'Name This Weed' competition at

www.weedbusters.org.nz



Strawberry dogwood
(*Dendrobenthamia capitata*)



Velvet groundsel
(*Roldana petasitis*)



Chinese privet
(*Ligustrum sinense*)



Common pampas
(*Cortaderia selloana*)

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