



Weedbusters!

www.weedbusters.org.nz

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**Working together
to protect New Zealand**

Christmas is over, but you can still kiss under the native mistletoe thanks to some dedicated Rotorua Weedbusters.

Native mistletoe saved from weeds

For the last two years, a dedicated group of volunteers from the Rotorua Botanical Society, the local community and DOC volunteers have been tackling weed infestations at reserves at Lake Okareka to protect native mistletoe (*Tupeia antarctica* and *Ileostylus micranthus*).



Photo: Paul Cashmore

Most of the weed work has focussed on removing a huge range of invasive species such as tradescantia, ivy, jasmine, convulvulus, blackberry and Japanese honeysuckle that threaten to overwhelm the mistletoe species.

This work culminated in a planting day in September to restore habitat for mistletoe in place of the exotic weed species that had dominated the area previously. Over 500 plants were put in by a team of 14 volunteers.

The Rotorua Botanical Society hopes that as well as safeguarding a botanically significant area for the long term, their work will raise awareness in the local community about managing the threat to biodiversity posed by weeds.

Wiping out a weedy wanderer

A precious bush remnant in the centre of Hamilton is getting a helping hand from a group of teenagers on a weed busting mission.

On their first weeding day, the group made inroads into carpets of tradescantia, and also pulled out montbretia, Chinese fan palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) and fatsia japonica seedlings that were taking hold.

The group had been looking for a community project they could get their teeth into, and will be making regular forays into weed infested Jubilee Bush as a result.



Photo: Carolyn Lewis

Cut climbers down to size

Climbers are biologically programmed to head towards the sunlight, so they clamber over anything in their way, causing damage to infested areas of bush in a variety of ways (see *Anti-social climbers*).



Mignonette vine in a cabbage tree.

The end result is often degraded forest canopy and little or no regeneration, as seedlings under the infested areas don't get enough light to grow.

Most climbers will easily grow back from cut stumps, stem fragments, or even from vines left in trees if they can touch the ground and take root. Because of this, it's important to deal with these weedy climbers carefully.

Regional council and DOC offices have specific information on control methods for different climbers. In general, there are two main methods used for controlling climbing weeds. The first is to cut the vines and treat the fresh stumps with a suitable herbicide to prevent regrowth. Cut vines are left in the trees to die, making sure they can't touch the ground and take root.

The second method is to overall spray infested areas, but care must be taken as most herbicides strong enough to kill weedy climbers will also damage desirable plants on contact.

Both methods require followup to treat any new seedlings or areas that were missed during the initial treatment.

Morning glory blues

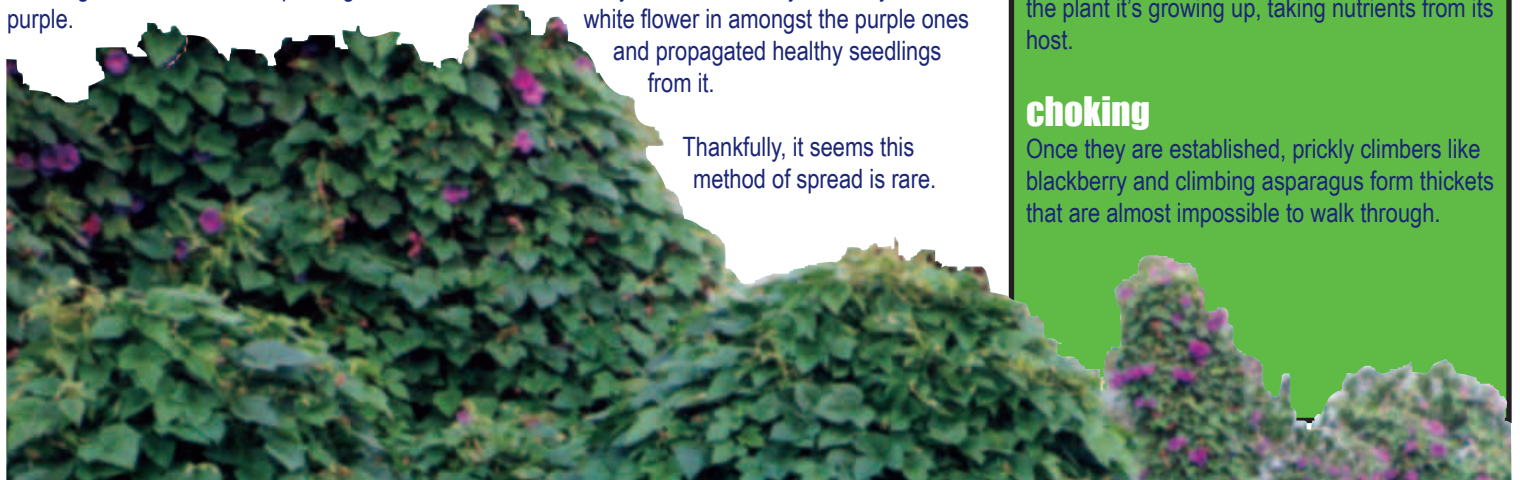
Blue morning glory (*Ipomoea indica*) is a common weed in many areas of New Zealand. While the flowers may be spectacular, the damage this garden escape is causing is horrifying.

Blue morning glory is a smotherer, totally covering bush areas in a carpet of green and purple.

It's frost tender, but quickly bounces back once the weather warms up, making it a perennial problem in areas where it has established.

Blue morning glory spreads by fragments and a fibrous root system. It was thought to only produce sterile seed until, in 1996, an observant biosecurity officer in the Bay of Plenty noted a white flower in amongst the purple ones and propagated healthy seedlings from it.

Thankfully, it seems this method of spread is rare.



Anti-social climbers

Watch out for this bad behaviour in a bush remnant near you.

squashing

Climbers that produce large quantities of heavy fruit (like moth plant) or aerial nodules (like mignonette vine) can collapse the plants they are growing over.

smothering

Climbers that grow very densely, such as old man's beard and Japanese honeysuckle, kill the plants they are growing over by starving them of light.

strangling

Some climbers twine so tightly around other plants that they squeeze the life out of them.



Photo: Kevin Loe

Climbing spindleberry, shown above, can cause permanent damage to pine trees, reducing their harvested value significantly, while jasmine ringbarks its host tree, eventually killing it.

sucking

Ivy is a very common climber that suckers onto the plant it's growing up, taking nutrients from its host.

choking

Once they are established, prickly climbers like blackberry and climbing asparagus form thickets that are almost impossible to walk through.



Photo: Sarah Mankelow

Happy New Year everyone!

It's just so exciting to see how many people are out there, busting weeds and raising weedbusting awareness. Has there ever been a more tenacious kind of people than those who fight weeds? And we have to be.

Weeds live a long time, cope with a multitude of conditions, spread quickly and are tough. And it looks like the same can be said of weedbusters. It's a real privilege seeing groups joining together and presenting a united front against weeds under the umbrella of Weedbusters.

Since our last newsletter, I have been lucky enough to be part of a community group tackling weed issues in their neighbourhood, and am in the enviable position of hearing amazing stories of committed individuals and groups on a daily basis.

Sharing these stories and experiences is one of my most important jobs, and I hope that through this newsletter, the website, and the Weedbusters network no-one feels like they're going it alone, everyone has access to good advice, and that you get a chance to feel that your hard work is being acknowledged.

So enjoy this newsletter, enjoy the summer, and be inspired by all of Aotearoa's weedbusters.

Happy Weedbusting.

Amber Bill
National Weedbusters Coordinator

Waikato Weedbusters write...

Woody Weed has been busy in the Waikato spreading the word about his troublesome relatives.

He was first spotted at a Te Aroha weed awareness event, then at the Waikato Home and Garden Show where he made a nuisance of himself while people visiting the Weedbusters stand learned about weeds.

Weedbusters also put in an appearance at the National Boat Show at Mystery Creek, with displays of alligator weed and messages about preventing weedspread for boaties to heed. The issue of aquatic weeds and how to keep them out of our lakes and waterways is an important one and we hope to take part in next year's National Boat Show with an even bigger and better display.

On the ground, we have plenty of groups that are doing weed work throughout the region and they are being encouraged to join the Weedbusters network and share their successes.

- Wendy Mead, Environment Waikato



Te Aroha Weedbusters Day Photo: Michelle Elborn

Back to school for weeds awareness

Students from two Christchurch schools got a special lesson about weeds and biological control agents when they were given the task of raising a population of gorse spider mites. These little critters are insects that eat only gorse and are released to help slow down the spread of this weed.

The students soon got right into their project, ringing up for advice as the insect populations grew. There were celebrations all round when the gorse spider mite populations were ready to release onto local gorse infestations to do their thing.

-Richard Goldsbrough, DOC



Julia Wilson-Davies (Landcare Research) with students at Yaldhurst Model School



Photo: Heydon Kerr

Brookfield Primary School in the Bay of Plenty is rocketing ahead with Weedbusting awareness.

Due to the enthusiasm of teachers and parent helpers, the school is clearing weeds like tradescantia out of its bush area.

It doesn't end there - with the support of Environment Bay of Plenty, a Brookfield School Community Care Group will soon be up and running to ensure the good work continues.

-Wendy Baker, Environment Bay of Plenty

The last word...

...must go to 8 year old Hinewaitai Tuhakaraina from Brookfield Primary School in the Bay of Plenty who wrote this poem after hearing about Weedbusters:

Woody Weed is a pest
So do not invite him like a guest.
Don't give him lunch
Give him a punch!
Pull him out by the roots
And don't forget to wear gumboots.
He can be spread by a cat
He can be spread by a bat
He's killing our natives every day
He's going bay to bay.
Weeds are planted in a line
Weeds grow into a vine
So come on, Weedbusters, help me quit this rhyme
Get out there and kill a weed vine!

Want to win a \$50 Gardening New Zealand voucher?

You can go in the monthly draw to win a \$50 Gardening New Zealand voucher.

Simply enter the 'Name This Weed' competition on

www.weedbusters.org.nz



Banana passionfruit
(*Passiflora tripartita*)



Chilean rhubarb
(*Gunnera tinctoria*)



Wild (kahili) ginger
(*Hedychium gardnerianum*)



Climbing spindleberry
(*Celastrus orbiculatus*)

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