



# Weedbusters!

[www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)

Wellington's 'Be the Difference' programme is living up to its name with an unusual way of drawing attention to weeds.



Photo: Clayton Howell

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## Graffiti for a good cause

The latest message from Greater Wellington Regional Council to raise awareness about weeds and what people can do about them is a real eye-catcher.

The "Stop the Killers" campaign has been kicked off with a bright graffiti mural on hoardings around the Waitangi Park construction site, near Wellington's Overseas Terminal.

Posters have also been pasted up around the region featuring photos of pest plants and

slogans such as "Wanted Dead Not Alive," "Have You Seen This Killer?" and "Wanted for Murder."

There will also be mailouts to ratepayers who have registered with the 'Be the Difference' programme, targeting seven common weed species in the region - buddleia, cape ivy, cotoneaster, onion weed, montbretia, Darwin's barberry, and tradescantia. Their efforts at clearing these weeds from their properties can get them into the draw for a \$3000 garden makeover - and all in time for the traditional garden clean up season!

## Manapouri's Broom Busters bounce back



Forty people and five dogs got together to bust weeds at Manapouri's Fraser Beach, with local YHA and Westpac staff and one homestay host and his five guests joining in.

They were rudely interrupted by Woody Weed, who tried to talk the kids into taking weeds home to plant in their gardens! No-one was fooled though, and despite these distractions, everyone worked really hard, weeding and feeding the bonfire and enjoying a barbeque at the end of the working bee.

- C. Brimecombe

Working together  
to protect New Zealand

# When good crops go crazy!



Jack and the Kiwifruit Vine

A large chunk of New Zealand's economy depends on the diverse crops that have been introduced into this country, both for large scale cropping and for 'boutique' industries.

Occasionally these crops start becoming a problem, moving out of cultivation and into bush, wetlands and tussocklands where they cause environmental damage. This is when the conflict between economic and environmental values can become a headache.

Kiwifruit is a prime example of what happens when an industry faces a downturn and crops are left to run rampant.

In the 1980s, kiwifruit was promoted as The Next Big Thing for small block owners and farmers wanting a second income from their land.

Thousands of kiwifruit vines were planted in the North Island, with the biggest concentration taking advantage of the warmer climates around Te Puke and Tauranga. For a while it was boom time for the kiwifruit industry, but eventually the sheer numbers of growers entering what was essentially a limited market meant disappointment. Not providing an ongoing

income, many kiwifruit vines were left to their own devices and tonnes of kiwifruit were dumped or used as stock fodder rather than being sold for human consumption.

The dumped fruit and neglected vines meant that birds, rats and possums could now spread kiwifruit far and wide. New plants started appearing in bush areas and river margins.

Despite being susceptible to spring frosts, there are few places in New Zealand where kiwifruit will not grow. At the moment wild kiwifruit infestations are limited to the Bay of Plenty, but sites have been found as far south as Canterbury.

The ability of kiwifruit vines to layer themselves into a solid mass of stems and trunk means control is difficult.

Kiwifruit is too much of a New Zealand icon and overseas export earner for it to ever be banned because of its naughty ways once it escapes into the wild. But the industry has recognised that wild kiwifruit is definitely an unwanted plant, and is coming to the party with funding to help eradication efforts.

## Rangitoto's lonely olive

Gallipoli has its Lone Pine, California's coast has its Lone Cypress, Auckland City has...well, did have...its One Tree - and Rangitoto, for a brief time, had its Lonely Olive.

Yes, a Lonely Olive.

Department of Conservation staff on a surveillance flight over Rangitoto last year to spot moth plant and tree privet were surprised to see a lone olive tree growing in a clump of pohutukawa. This discovery meant that the olive's days were numbered, and it was removed without delay.

Olive trees are emerging as a new weed threat in Auckland and Northland, and are spreading onto nearby Motuihe Island. Olives are one of the weeds targeted for eradication on Raoul Island. This was the first time an olive had been found on Rangitoto Island.

Olive fruit and the seeds they contain can be carried long distances by birds such as kererū and starlings, and deposited almost anywhere.

As olive crops have increased in New Zealand, so too have the records of olives growing wild in grasslands or bush, where they can compete with more desirable species. Dense patches will shade out lower-growing natives and will certainly prevent the establishment of new native seedlings.

New Zealand is not the only country where olives have gone feral. Olives have been established as an important crop in Australia for some time, and feral olives have been regarded as a weed in South Australia for many years.

These wild olives exist as small, widespread, populations that have invaded lowland grassland,



grassy woodland, riparian areas and rocky outcrops. Apparently olives are also becoming major invaders of parklands near Camden in New South Wales, and in the Adelaide Hills. Tasmania, too, is concerned about future wild olive infestations and has developed a strategy to limit their spread.



## In the thick of it...

**B**elieve it or not, Weedbusters is now officially two years old! Since the launch in 2003, we have come a long way, thanks to all those who have got involved and made it all happen.

Like most two year olds, Weedbusters is finding its feet and is working out how far it can go to achieve what it wants to achieve.

This last twelve months has seen Weedbusters make contact with district and city councils, branches of Forest and Bird, Federated Farmers, and other similar groups in the hope that this will lead to stronger relationships that will benefit the weedbusting effort.

We've got to the point where event organisers are contacting Weedbusters wanting us to take part in what they are doing, and where Woody Weed is being recognised by kids and adults alike.

Weedbusting events around the country are becoming more varied, more innovative, and more visible, with a swag of positive media coverage that seems to grow every month. More events than ever are now being promoted through the Weedbusters website.

And I can't praise enough the efforts of all the volunteers, young and not so young, who have taken the Weedbusters message to heart and are tackling weeds in their own time and in their own areas.

The challenge for the next twelve months is to keep this momentum going. I have no doubt that we can do it.

**Carolyn Lewis**  
**Acting National**  
**Weedbusters Coordinator**

# Canterbury Weedbusters write...

**I**t's been all go in Canterbury recently, with boneseed blitzes, weekends at Lake Ohau, and plans for more Lake Pearson/Moana Rua weeding bees.

Christchurch City Council joined forces with Environment Canterbury, DOC, and a swag of volunteers to launch a major attack on the boneseed bothering the Port Hills area.

They started the battle with a public talk, and moved on to a major weeding bee based at Cracroft Reserve on the Port Hill.

Woody Weed was there to cheer them on and gave out handcrafted Boneseed Busters balloons to kids who helped. Volunteers enjoyed a barbeque at the end of the day to celebrate their awesome efforts.

The blitz finished off with a boneseed cut and collection from local properties and a mass mulching at Victoria Park.



Woody Weed and helper hand out balloons in front of the historic Sign of the Takahe.

## Gore's flamecreeper frenzy

**S**tudents at St Peter's College are leading the battle to eradicate Chilean flamecreeper from popular bush and scenic reserve areas near Gore.

The students have been working with the Department of Conservation and Gore District Council this year to clear Chilean flamecreeper from Croyden's Bush, a DOC reserve, and Dolamore Park, a Gore District Council scenic reserve.

The students involved range in age from 12 to 15, and usually work in their own time on weekends.

A recent 'flamecreeper frenzy' saw four students, the caretaker at Dolamore Park, the mayor of Gore District Council and DOC staff brave cold and wet weather to continue their mission to eradicate this destructive weed.

- Leanne Keenan, DOC



The Gore flamecreeper team (L-R): John Adams (Teacher, St Peter's College), Vic Herring (Dolamore Park Caretaker), Oleta Millan and Chloe Heath (students), Tracy Hicks (Mayor, Gore District Council), Nichole Huddleston and Annabel Garrity (students), and Trevor Huggins (DOC). Photo: Leanne Keenan.

## Canterbury Weedbusters write...

(cont.)

This effort follows on from smaller boneseed blitzes that volunteers have been undertaking in the Godley Head area of the Port Hills.

Futher inland, the Lake Ohau Community Group have been working diligently to remove sweet briar and the odd wilding pine from along roadsides near the lake. The group is doing a fantastic job, and there are murmurs that a similar initiative to tackle weeds around the shores of Lake Pukaki could be set up in future.

Things are also heating up at Lake Pearson/ Moana Rua wildlife refuge as plans for more weeding bees are made. This area is an important habitat for many bird species, and volunteers have been targeting sweet briar, blackberry and sycamore trees.

St Andrew's College Year 9 students have been helping out, handpulling thistles and willow seedlings as part of their outdoor curriculum, and a Lincoln University landscape ecology class are using the area to explore ecological health.

And if that wasn't enough, GardeNZ 2005, Canterbury's biggest garden and landscaping show, kicks off on Labour Weekend - and the Canterbury Weedbusters will be there, providing advice to landowners about what they can do to stop the spread of weeds.

Good on ya, guys!

# 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 at

## [www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)



Tuber ladder fern  
(*Nephrolepis cordifolia*)



Italian buckthorn  
(*Rhamnus alaternus*)



Periwinkle  
(*Vinca major*)



Aluminium plant  
(*Galeobdolon luteum*)

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