



Weedbusters!

www.weedbusters.org.nz

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The Watson's Creek Restoration Project in Greymouth is firing ahead, thanks to the efforts of Karoro School's Year 7 and 8 class, the local Pippins, Brownies, Guides and Rangers. With energy to burn, these junior Weedbusters show that with enough willing hands, weeds can be busted by the tried and true methods of handpulling and digging.

Brownie points for junior Weedbusters



Photo: Leanne Goodall

A wet summer meant plenty of weeds in the Watson's Creek restoration area, so on Greymouth's first sunny day for weeks, Karoro School students were on the spot and ready for some weed busting. They really put their backs into the job, fuelled by the knowledge that the team with the biggest pile of weeds would win Easter eggs. In the end, two trailers were piled high with assorted weeds and rank grass.

Meanwhile, another team of students, with help from Department of Conservation staff, made a list of weeds found on the site, including gorse, broom, blackberry, montbretia, arum lily, docks, convolvulus, onion weed, Scotch thistle, fennel, Chilean rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*) and tradescantia (*Tradescantia fluminensis*).

The Pippins and Brownies, some only five years old, were a real help, weighing down carpet with rocks, spreading grass seed, spotting gorse for older persons to pull out, and doing hand weeding. They also helped to plant out 50-odd native plants on the site, making an excellent job of it.

At the end of the working bee, the Brownies and Pippins were shown how to use a fish net to trawl the bottom of the creek, with the objective of seeing what stream life was present. A fun time was had by all!

- Mary Trayes

Old man's beard gets the chop!



Peter Wilson, Nathan James, Joseph Coley, tutor Riki Te Tau and landowner Herb Chase. Photo: Elaine Iddon

The YMCA Dannevirke Conservation Corp recently lent a helping hand in the battle against weeds in their region. In exchange for a lesson from landowner Herb Chase on the history of the local area and his lwi, Rangitane, the group spent the morning with Herb stump treating old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*) in his regenerating bush remnant. These keen Weedbusters helped ensure a more promising future for this worthwhile restoration project.

- Elaine Iddon
Horizons Regional Council

Working together
to protect New Zealand

Dumping a Bad Habit



Of all the methods of spread that plants have at their disposal - like wind, water and birds - human beings have to be the most effective means of dispersing weeds far and wide.

A typical story goes something like this: a friend gives you a plant that they recommend because it 'grows profusely' and is 'easy as pie to propagate.' The plant then proceeds to go trifid-like in its enthusiasm to take over your garden, and several greenwaste bags later, your patience is running out.

Solution? That gully or park at the back of your place would make a good dumping ground, because, as we all know, plant matter simply rots down if you leave it long enough.

WRONG! Dumping is the number one way that many weedy plant species are spread into bush areas and other environments.

Research done by DOC on weed species in dune areas where greenwaste dumping is permitted,

revealed a total of 249 species that were making themselves at home in the sand.

Similar results would be expected and can be seen in any gully or riverbank where dumping, legal or illegal, takes place.

So clean up your act - ditch the dumping habit and dispose of weed waste wisely!



Photo: Greater Wellington Regional Council

Top Tips for Weed Waste

- ✓ Take it to an organic recycling centre or refuse transfer station (check with your local council)
- ✓ On the farm, burn it immediately (if permitted by local council) or bury deeply
- ✓ Remove seed heads, fruit, tubers and bulbs before composting and don't compost plants that grow from fragments
- ✓ Pile it up, cover it in black plastic, and leave it to rot down
- ✓ Use a commercial green waste bag or bin from a reputable company

For more tips on weed control and disposal, check out the new 'Weedbusting' booklet, free from www.weedbusters.org.nz

Wicked Wandering Tradescantia

Poor John Tradescant; the 17th century plant collector must be turning in his grave to see the environmental damage being wrought by the plant that bears his name.

Although we have John to thank for the popularity of such beautiful trees as horse chestnut, New Zealand Weedbusters are more likely to associate him with a particularly nasty groundcover - tradescantia.



Once a popular pot plant (probably because it can survive any sort of neglect!) tradescantia is now a real curse in bush fragments, wetlands and other areas.

Tradescantia has a fleshy leaf that is arranged

alternately along an equally fleshy stem; stems have lots of nodes that take root when they come in contact with the ground, which means that control is tricky as every little piece of this plant can grow.

That one trait, combined with tradescantia's tolerance to all but the deepest shade, means that this groundcover has plenty of chances to infest disturbed bush and wetland areas.

As tradescantia doesn't set seed in New Zealand, its appearance in new areas can only be blamed on the dumping of weed waste from gardens.

One method for taming large areas of tradescantia is to 'rake and roll' it and then dispose of it (see 'Top Tips for Weed Waste' above) taking care not to drop fragments that can regrow.

Another method is to overall spray the the infestation with a suitable herbicide - check with your local DOC office or

regional council for advice, and be aware that any herbicide strong enough to kill tradescantia will also kill other plants unless care is taken during spraying.

All methods of tradescantia control require ongoing follow up work to stop any regrowth in its tracks.

Wandering jew, wandering Willie; whatever you want to call it, tradescantia is one wanderer you don't want to see in the wild.



Photo: Tony Fraser

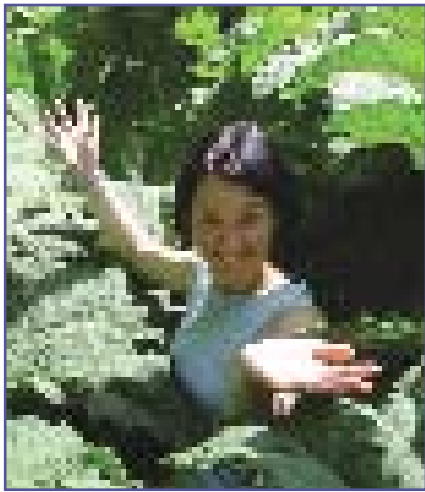


Photo: Sarah Mankelov

In the Thick of It...

It looks like we need a bigger newsletter!

We're overwhelmed with stories of individuals and groups dedicated to getting rid of weeds (*a.k.a. Weedbusting*). Many thanks to all contributors, whether or not we found space for your story. And please keep sending them in, so we can build a picture of how big a battle New Zealand is facing.

In April we had our first Weedbusters Network workshop with a Weedbusters representative from each region in New Zealand. We created heaps of challenges for ourselves, and soared out of the meeting on our collective energy ready to inspire others.

There have always been a dedicated posse fighting the hard fight against weeds; what we've never had before is a common banner under which we can all stand. The Weedbusters banner gives us networks to campaign through, and adds strength to our voice.

If you or your group tend to get tangled in weeds, Weedbusters would like to invite you to join in, to add strength to the Weedbusters message, and to chalk up a no-vote for weeds.

Visit www.weedbusters.org.nz to check out Weedbusters close to you and to get involved. If you are planning some work that involves weeding, ask to register your event on-line.

Go Weedbusters!

Amber Bill
National Weedbusters Coordinator

Wanganui Weedbusters write...

On Saturday 1 May 2004 members of the Wanganui Museum Botanical Group entered into the Weedbusters spirit, and attacked Jerusalem cherry (*Solanum pseudocapsicum*) at Gordon Park Scenic Reserve near Wanganui. The day was very well co-ordinated by DOC's Whanganui Area Office community relations person, Ridgway Lythgoe.

This is the second year that the group has pulled weeds here. A hardy team of seven spent about five hours pulling out Jerusalem cherry plus the occasional other intruder. It did rain a bit, but we got on with it and achieved a huge amount; Ridgway's scrumptious morning tea helped! The rain also had its benefits – it washed off the editing on the Weedbusters sign, which had been altered from "AT WORK" to "FAT WORKOUT". When I find the culprit I'll sit on him.

We concentrated on clearing weeds from the inside of the track (only about 500m) in the morning session, and tackled some of the denser infestations after lunch. We all felt

pretty happy with our effort, and we'll probably be back next year. There was also talk of starting a 'friends' group for the reserve.

Like many other botanical groups around the country, the Wanganui Museum Botanical Group tries to allocate one of its monthly field trips a year to putting something back into the community. And the idea of working under the Weedbusters banner seemed to go down well with the members.

- Graeme La Cock
Wanganui Museum Botanical Group



Photo: Graeme La Cock

Weedbusters a Fieldays Favourite

Weedbusters were hard at work at the National Agricultural Fieldays (Mystery Creek, Waikato, July 16-19).

The Weedbusters tent was surrounded by a deceptively attractive garden that on closer inspection was riddled with weeds like woolly nightshade, wild ginger, jasmine and tradescantia.



Many people found the weedy garden all too familiar, and Weedbusters from Environment Waikato (EW), Auckland Regional Council (ARC) and Department of Conservation (DOC) went hoarse offering advice on control methods. Thanks to ARC for providing the display weeds used on site; they were certainly a crowd-puller.

As well as identifying weeds and offering advice on how to control them, Weedbusters also recommended plants to grow instead of weeds; for every weed there is a non-weedy alternative.

Congratulations must go to DOC at Waikato for producing an eye-catching display that attracted a steady stream of people, many of whom had weedbusting stories of their own to share.

- Amber Bill and Richard Goldsbrough
Department of Conservation

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

You can go in the monthly draw to win one of two \$50 Gardening New Zealand vouchers.

Simply enter the 'Name This Weed' competition on
www.weedbusters.org.nz



Darwin's barberry
(*Berberis darwinii*)



Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*
ssp. monilifera)



Climbing asparagus (*Asparagus*
scandens)



Pink ragwort (*Senecio*
glastifolius)



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