

# Enlisting New Weed Warriors

Photo: Landcare Research



Photo: Landcare Research

There's a new weapon to help fight the war on weeds - biological control (biocontrol).

The aim is to reduce the fertility and/or increase the mortality of target weed species through the use of specialised parasites, predators and pathogens. Biocontrol agents attack specific parts of the weed from its roots through to its flowers and seeds, weakening adult plants, shortening their lifespan, and preventing them from reproducing.



Photo: Landcare Research

It doesn't happen overnight, but it will happen.

Biocontrol is a long term approach to weed control. Not all weeds will die, but biocontrol can drastically reduce the abundance of weeds or limit the spread of seed, as much as 90% for ragwort.

Successful biocontrol agents have been found for gorse, ragwort and hawkweeds, while investigations into biocontrol agents for *Tradescantia*, buddleia and other weed species continue. Research is funded by a national collective of regional councils and the Department of Conservation and carried out by organisations such as Landcare Research.



Photo: Landcare Research

## Enlisting help

- Ask your regional council which biocontrol agents are available in your area.
- Encourage your school or community group to adopt a biocontrol release.
- Be mindful of biocontrol populations in your area and be responsible with the use of pesticides.
- Collect and redistribute biocontrol agents from established populations.

Biocontrol agents – fighting the unseen war on weeds.



Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai

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

WEEDBUSTERS