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HOW TO IDENTIFY DIEBACK ON ROADSIDES: SUMMARY REPORT.

Prepared by

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for

Roadside Conservation Committee

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INTRODUCTION.

The material given in this report is a summary of a package prepared by Hart, Simpson and Associates Pty Ltd for the Roadside Conservation Committee, titled "HOW TO IDENTIFY DIEBACK ON ROADSIDES.". This summary has been prepared to allow the preparation of a simple promotional document advising that the full package is available, recommending its use, and giving basic information on who should use it and how to use it.

The summary is presented as a series of sections suitable for incorporation into a small format booklet with appropriate graphics material.

1. Title page.

DIEBACK ON ROADSIDES:

HOW TO IDENTIFY IT,

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.

A package from the Roadside Conservation Committee.

Graphics: Banksia

CONTENTS

2. Introductory page.

DIEBACK ON ROAD VERGES.

The Roadside Conservation Committee recognises dieback as a serious threat to the conservation of vegetation on roadsides, and has prepared a package which:

- explains how to identify possible dieback infections,
- gives a method for assessing the importance of any infection, and
- provides a means of recording possible infections.

This pamphlet describes the package.

Facing page: graphic of roadworks/vegetation

New page?

WHAT IS DIEBACK?

Dieback is a soil-borne fungal root rot disease which kills many species of native plants. It is causing serious damage to native vegetation in many areas of the south west of Western Australia.

Dieback is spread mainly by human activities such as road building, earthmoving, grading, fencing, drilling and firebreaking. It can also be spread by water movement.

The only way to control dieback is to prevent its spread, and introduction to new sites.

Roadsides are very susceptible to dieback infection because they are so prone to the human activities which introduce dieback, both on the road reserve and on adjoining land.

Facing page: Map of dieback distribution

4. First page of text.

HOW TO TELL IF DIEBACK IS PRESENT.

Dieback is a microscopic fungus and it cannot be seen, but it can be recognised from the damage it does to the vegetation.

Dieback can be recognised from:

1. The species affected.

Some species are badly affected, some moderately and some not at all. The plants most affected are the Banksias and related plants. Many of the plants we call wildflowers are badly affected.

2. The distribution of affected plants.

The affected plants usually occur in lines or groups and follow the watercourse or human activity which introduced the dieback.

3. The drainage, soils and topography.

Dieback is more likely to occur where there is wet soil, such as in drains and low-lying areas. It can occur anywhere if there are highly susceptible plants present.

4. The presence of an activity which could have introduced the disease.

Good management is required to prevent this happening again.

Facing page: photo of dieback situation

5. Second page of text.

HOW IMPORTANT IS A DIEBACK INFECTION?

The importance of a possible infection depends on the damage it is doing and the chance that it will be spread.

An infection could be very important if it is affecting:

Declared Rare Flora,

A National Park or nature reserve,

Valuable roadside vegetation, or

A site of local interest.

The chance that an infection will be spread depends on:

How susceptible the adjacent vegetation is, and

What works are planned.

It is usually necessary to prove that the dieback fungi are present and a final decision can only be made by an expert, but the procedure described here can be used to identify situations which require further attention.

Facing page: DRF

6. Third page of text.

WHO SHOULD USE THE DIEBACK IDENTIFICATION PACKAGE?

The dieback package could be used by:

Naturalists or other people wishing to identify and record possible dieback infections,

Government officers wishing to include dieback in the environmental assessment of their roadworks, and

Groups working to conserve roadside vegetation.

Graphics: photograph of person working on roadside.

6. Concluding page.

HOW TO USE THE DIEBACK IDENTIFICATION PACKAGE.

The dieback identification package gives greater detail on how to tell if dieback is present and how to assess the importance of a possible infection. It includes standard forms which ask a series of questions. The answers to these questions lead to the best possible conclusion.

The package is supported by a training programme.

To use the package fully, it is necessary to have knowledge of the local vegetation and to have some training in dieback identification. For further information contact the Roadside Conservation Committee:

ROADSIDE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
P.O. BOX 104
COMO 6152

7. Final information page.

OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

List of other publications available on dieback and roadside vegetation, and addresses of organisations.