

2
WANTED

**SKELETON
WEED**



**THE
FARMER'S
NUMBER ONE
ENEMY**

SKELETON WEED ~THE COST TO THE FARMER

**THE ANNUAL COST OF SKELETON
WEED IN THE EASTERN STATES
EXCEEDS THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS.**

REDUCED YIELDS

Skeleton weed frequently reduces grain yields by more than half.

Heavy infestations make cropping uneconomic.



BLOCKS HARVESTERS

The tough wiry stems of skeleton weed block and damage harvesters.

Dense stands make harvesting impossible.



CONTROL~ DIFFICULT AND COSTLY

Cultivation helps to spread skeleton weed.

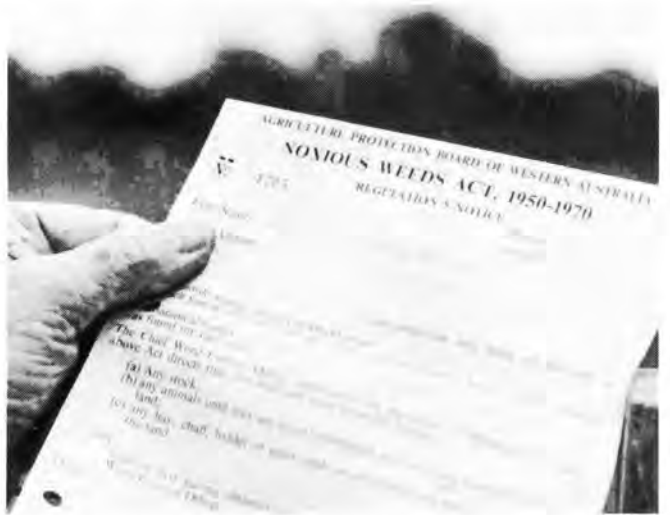
Herbicides to control the weed in crop are expensive, and only suppress growth.

Eradication relies on the use of costly soil residual herbicides.



QUARANTINE

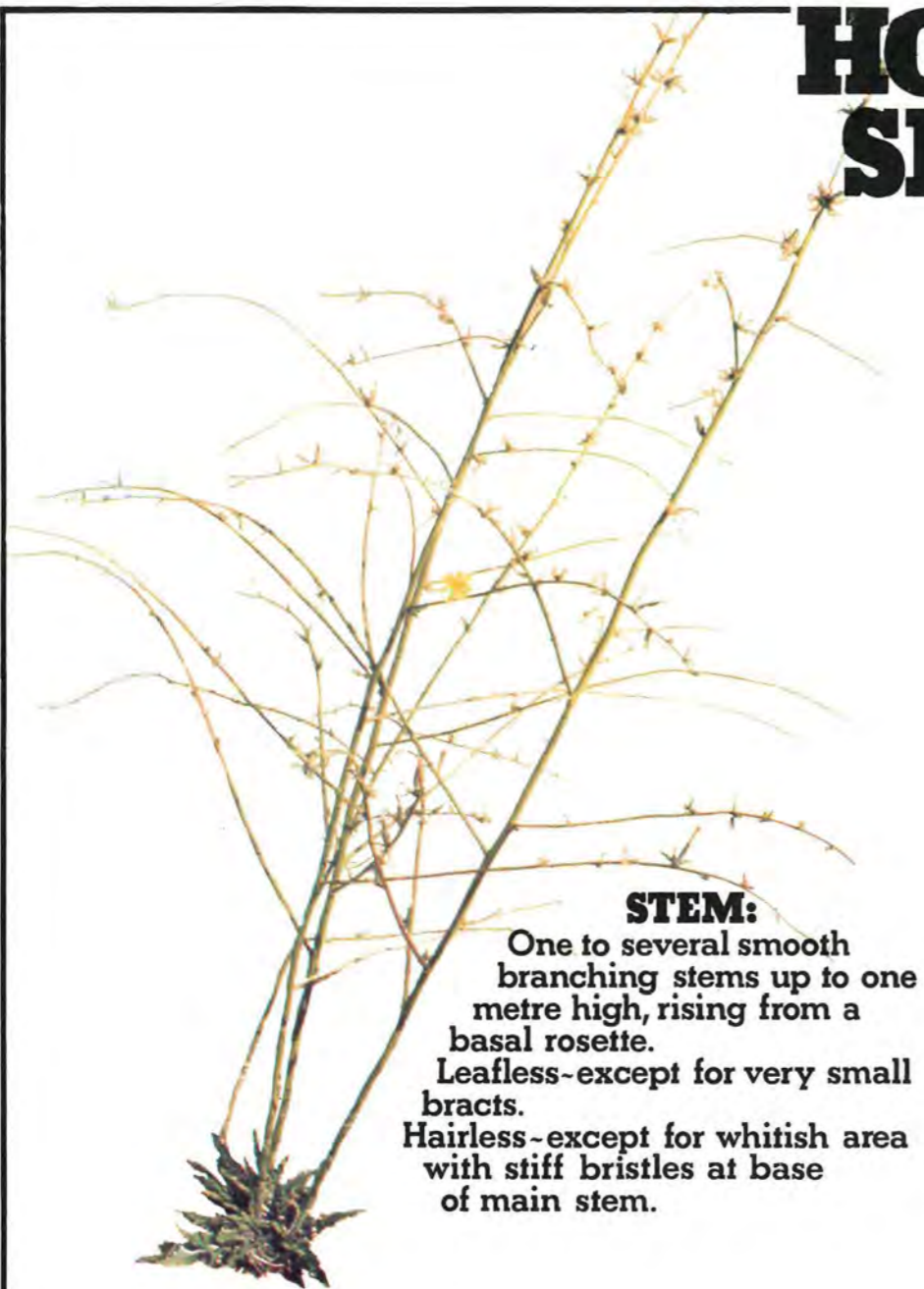
Infested properties are subject to quarantine restrictions on sale and movement of produce and machinery.



REDUCED ASSETS AND BORROWING POWER



HOW TO IDENTIFY SKELETON WEED



STEM:

One to several smooth branching stems up to one metre high, rising from a basal rosette. Leafless-except for very small bracts. Hairless-except for whitish area with stiff bristles at base of main stem.

FLOWERS:
Bright yellow, small daisy-like flowers up to 2 cm across, are formed singly or in groups of 2 or 3 near the ends of the branchlets.



Flowering-early December to end of March.



SEED:

Each flower produces 9 to 15 seeds, about 1/2 cm long. Seeds have 'blow-away' parachute attachments and small teeth.



ROSETTE LEAVES:

Rosette or basal leaves 5 to 10 cm long, are hairless with 'turned-back' barb-like lobes. They are green - though often tinged a reddish-brown - and usually die off about the time flowering commences early December.



ROOT:

The taproot has little taper and many side shoots. It is often two metres or more deep and, like the stem, contains a white, sticky sap.



Report all suspect plants immediately to your district weed control officer, the Agriculture Protection Board, Jarrah Rd, South Perth (Telephone 670111), the nearest district office of the Department of Agriculture, or Shire Councils.

HISTORY

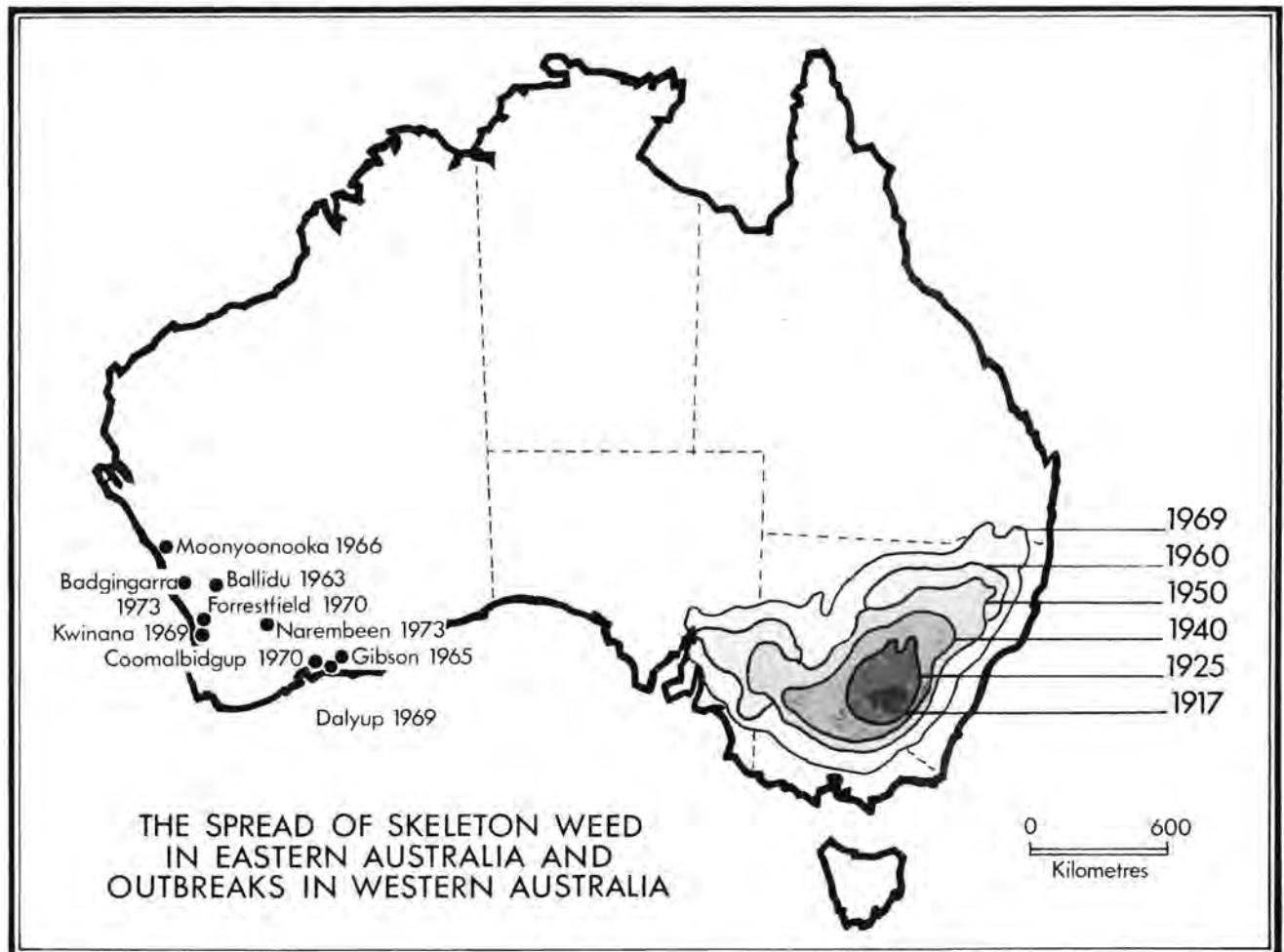
Skeleton weed is native to the Mediterranean and central European regions, but has spread to other parts of the world, including Australia.

About a quarter of NSW and large areas in Victoria and South Australia are heavily infested.

Up to April 1974, Western

Australia had 25 outbreaks since the weed was first found at Ballidu in 1963. The 1974 multiple outbreaks at Narembeen raise the grim possibility that skeleton weed could be with us permanently.

Immediate and total eradication is imperative.



DESCRIPTION

Skeleton weed is a hardy, deep-rooted, summer-flowering, perennial weed of cereal and cultivated land.

1. CLIMATE AND SOIL TYPE:

Skeleton weed favours light soils and grows in a variety of climates with rainfall varying from 225 to 1,500 mm annually.

An eminent ecologist has said that in "...the southern part of Western Australia, there are certainly no climatic limitations to the continued spread of the weed."

2. LIFE CYCLE:

Seeds germinate in autumn, producing rosettes in winter and upright branched flowering stems in spring. Flowers and seed develop from early December until late March, when the plants die off.

New rosettes regenerate from the tap root the following autumn, continuing the cycle.

3. PROPAGATION:

Under ideal conditions an adult plant can produce as many as 1,500 seeds with an average viability of 90%. But seeds have little or no dormancy and are seldom viable after 18 months.

Seeds have 'parachute' attachments for dispersal by wind, and small teeth which bury and cling to rough surfaces.

Skeleton weed also propagates by root cuttings, and by new shoots from lateral roots down 150 cm or more.

The spread of skeleton weed in NSW averaged 25 kilometres per year over 40 years.

APB skeleton weed search - Naremben



JOIN THE ERADICATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST SKELETON WEED

KNOW what skeleton weed looks like
and how it spreads. **PREVENT** spread by
taking all possible precautions, and insist
that others do likewise.

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- ▶ **DO NOT PURCHASE** un-certified seed - it can be risky.
 - ▶ **ENSURE** that imported stock, other produce and second-hand machinery have the required certificate of cleanliness, and are examined on arrival in W.A.
 - ▶ **ENSURE** that contract super-spreading trucks, earthmoving machinery and seed graders do not carry seed or root fragments.
 - ▶ **COVER** trucks delivering grain to CBH bins.
 - ▶ **CHECK** and re-check your property and keep a sharp lookout when harvesting.
 - ▶ **REPORT** all suspect plants immediately to
 - ▶ your district weed control officer,
 - ▶ the Agriculture Protection Board, Jarrah Rd South Perth (Telephone 67 0111),
 - ▶ the nearest district office of the Department of Agriculture
 - or
 - ▶ Shire Councils.

APB skeleton weed search - Naremben

