

Agriculture Protection Board  
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# GERALDTON CARNATION WEED



1. Mature plant 2. Flowers 3. Sap exuding from broken stem

(continued overleaf)

# GERALDTON CARNATION WEED

**G**ERALDTON carnation weed (*Euphorbia terracina* L), known as False caper in eastern Australia, is a member of the spurge family (*Euphorbiaceae*). In spite of its common name, it is not closely related to the garden carnation. Geraldton carnation weed appears to be limited to poor sandy soils, particularly coastal sands, in Western Australia from Geraldton to Esperance.

It is a declared plant (noxious weed) in most parts of Western Australia.

## **Significance:**

Geraldton carnation weed is of little significance to agriculture, however heavy grazing may cause stock poisoning. Broken stems exude a sticky white sap<sup>3</sup> which may cause temporary blindness if

allowed to come in contact with the eyes. Children, in particular, may be harmed by playing in Geraldton carnation weed.

## **Description:**

Geraldton carnation weed is a leafy, pale green, erect perennial plant up to 1 m high growing in dense stands.<sup>1</sup> The leaves are sessile (stalkless) narrow and 3 to 6 cm long with teeth near the apex.

The flowers are yellow, inconspicuous and surrounded by pointed oval bracts. They occur in clusters at the stem apex.<sup>2</sup>

The fruit are small about 5 mm long, three lobed and smooth, they contain many greyish smooth seeds.

## **Ecology:**

Geraldton carnation weed is a perennial with a deep root system.

Flowering takes place in spring and seeds are formed in summer.

It spreads by seeds which are carried by vehicles and stock along roadsides. There are no special adaptations for seed dispersal.

Generally infestations are limited to waste land and disturbed urban areas where competition from other plants is limited.

*For information on Geraldton carnation weed recognition and control contact the Agricultural Protection Board, Jarrah Road, South Perth, telephone (09) 367 0111 or any country office of the Agriculture Protection Board or Department of Agriculture.*