
IN BRIEF

Biological control of Paterson's Curse

Paterson's Curse is a major weed of both agriculture and bushland in WA. It is a winter-growing annual whose broad leaves smother surrounding plants. A big effort is being made to find an effective 'biological control' which would destroy the weed but not anything else. Apart from various weevils and leaf-eating insects, another possible agent is the blight fungus

Cercospora echii, but this was ruled out due to quarantine restrictions into Australia.

But - surprise! Some Paterson's Curse plants with *Cercospora* infections were discovered growing on the Greenough Flats. Louise Marin of CSIRO in Canberra is testing to see if spores can be developed as a 'mycoherbicide' which could be put out over the target plants and so control them. Work still proceeds.