

## WEED ALERT

# PATERSON'S CURSE

**T**HE beautiful blue of Paterson's Curse (*Echium plantagineum*) is spreading inexorably across the State and looks set to eventually eliminate everlastings from much of the mulga belt - it has already done a good job of taking over the ground flora in Coalseam National Park, for example. It's broadrosettes and fast growth rate simply outcompete plants such as everlastings, orchids and native grasses. It is a major environmental weed.

It is also a major agricultural weed, which can lead to up to 80% loss of pasture production and cause severe liver damage in stock. The Department of Agriculture has released six biological control agents which are starting to have an effect in some areas, but control on individual properties remains essential. Several herbicides can be used, but, if you have not personally had training in the use of herbicides, for the treatment of small areas by spot-spraying or a weeding wand, *LFW* suggests using glyphosate

(Roundup ® or Zero ®) as this remains (relatively) benign.

Late winter is a great time to get stuck into it, on your block, or, with permission, on roadsides, or your local reserve. It is vital to prevent it seeding, remember the old saw:

**"One year's seeding - seven years' weeding!"**

AgWA has produced several notes in which you will find detailed control and management advice, including exact herbicide prescriptions:

"How to Control Paterson's Curse" Farmnote 131/2000

"Paterson's Curse" Farmnote 43/00 and, best of all, the detailed and superbly illustrated:

"Paterson's Curse Management Handbook" Bulletin 4452, August 2001.

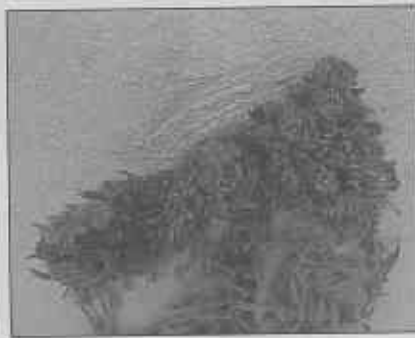
Copies can be obtained from AgWA offices, or phone (08) 9368 3333, or visit web site: [www.agric.wa.gov.au](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au)

*Penny Hussey*

## THE TRIFFIDS ARE COMING!

John Lambie of Chittering sent in these pics of a strange form of Paterson's Curse, asking what caused this form of growth, which is called 'fasciation'. It is the result of damage to the growing point of a young plant, probably by insects, perhaps carrying a viral disease. Instead of growing from one point as normal, the stem of a fasciated plant grows from many points, producing the spectacular growth form shown here.

Sandy Lloyd of Weed Science in AgWA says that Flatweed and Skeleton Weed also commonly show fasciation, though not usually as spectacularly. It is also known in some native plants.



## IN BRIEF

### Managing Bridal Creeper

The papers from this very successful workshop, organised by Blackwood Valley Landcare and *LFW*, have been put on a CD.

If you are trying to manage this weed, you'll find these papers very helpful.

Cost: \$12.50 (includes p&h)

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