

WEEDS

WEEDS TO WATCH

Greg Keighery

Wonga wonga vine or inland wonga vine

Wonga wonga vine (*Pandorea pandorana*) is a widespread vine with white trumpet shaped flowers that grows in eastern Australia, extending to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Vanuatu. There are disjunct populations of this species in the Central Australian Ranges, the Bungle Bungles and the Pilbara. The species is a naturalised weed in New Zealand. Reports of this species spreading into bushland in Bramley National Park, near Margaret River and the Perth Hills are being received. Peter Day of Kalamunda has noted that of the numerous cultivars of this species only the white flowered form is seeding. It appears to have passed the initial build up phase and is now entering the invasion stage.



Wonga wonga vine. Photo: Greg Keighery

Another star-of-Bethlehem

Not quite Christmas - John Moore from Department of Agriculture and Food WA is working to control a naturalised population of garden star-of-Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*) near Ravensthorpe. This species is a summer host for barley rust (*Puccinea hordei*), and allows sexual reproduction to occur, potentially producing new strains able to infect resistant plants. Garden star-of-Bethlehem is well established in South Australia. We have three other species of star-of-Bethlehem already naturalised and weedy in WA.



Garden star-of-Bethlehem could boost the threat of barley rust. Photo: Rhonda Surman (Under Creative Commons license)

Another Galium

Western Australia has six members of the genus *Galium* (bedstraws, cleavers or goosegrasses), of which five are weeds. Another to add now is marsh bedstraw (*Galium palustre*). This very delicate white flowered annual vine was obviously imported as a garden plant and has been recently recorded growing rampantly in creeks around Northcliffe and towards Pemberton. Large scale fires in this area have opened up many of the creeklines and may help spread of this potentially serious wetland weed. This species is well established in eastern Australia and other areas.

Marsh bedstraw is a particular threat to wetland areas. Photo: Greg Keighery



Eastern Australian bottlebrushes

Introduced bottlebrushes are spreading rapidly in lakes and creeks around Perth south to Bunbury. There are several species involved, including crimson bottlebrush (*Callistemon citrinus*) and weeping bottlebrush (*C. viminalis*), as well as various selections and hybrids. The species and selections readily cross, and many can set seed without fertilisation giving rise to pure true breeding forms. Currently most are found outside the range of our two native bottlebrushes, but recently hybrids were found with local Albany bottlebrush (*Callistemon glaucus*) near Lake Powell, between Albany and Denmark.

Greg Keighery is a botanist and research scientist with Parks and Wildlife.



Introduced bottlebrush.

Photo: Greg Keighery

