

AUSTRALIA GIVES BACK TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

Greg Keighery

J-M Dufour-Dror (2012) Alien Invasive Plants in Israel
Middle East Nature Promotion Association, Jerusalem.

Not surprisingly given the similarity in climate, nearly all the weeds listed in this book are recorded in Western Australia. However, one major exception is camphor weed (*Heterotheca subaxillaris*), a daisy from U.S. and Mexico. This species transforms coastal dunes, filling in open areas and creating a monoculture. Already a weed in Argentina, it is not a species we need.

However, to show that WA gives as well as receives, we have contributed to Israel's weed flora with four invasive species: bramble wattle (*Acacia victoriae*; introduced for afforestation), orange wattle (*A. saligna*; afforestation, soil stabilisation & landscaping), coastal wattle (*A. cyclops*; soil stabilisation) and pop saltbush (*Atriplex holocarpa*; forage).

The book lists another seven WA natives as spreading: limestone wattle (*Acacia sclerosperma*), Mueller's saltbush (*Atriplex muelleri*; a conservation-listed species in WA - Priority 1), berry saltbush (*A. semibaccata*; already weedy in U.S.), sprawling saltbush (*A. suberecta*), nodding saltbush (*Einadia nutans*), ruby saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*) and small-leaf saltbush (*Maireana brevifolia*). Mostly these have been brought in for forage and not known as weeds elsewhere in the world. Again this shows that species introduced to new areas for forage or soil stabilisation rarely stay where they are wanted.

Orange wattle (*Acacia saligna*) in its natural setting.
Photo: Bruce Maslin

