



CHILEAN NEEDLE GRASS – IT'S SHARP, GROWING LIKE CRAZY AND A HEADACHE FOR LANDOWNERS

Chilean Needle Grass is a declared noxious weed that is causing angst for farmers and land managers on the south side of the Great Dividing Range but is already being detected in a number of Shires including Mitchell, Strathbogie and Murrindindi on the north side of the Range.

Chilean Needle Grass (biological name *Nassella neesiana*) which owes its origins to South America, (mostly probably Argentina) was first identified in Northcote about 1930.

How it came to Victoria is unknown.

During the 1970s it spread quite rapidly and presumably due to the improved seasonal conditions of the past two years, post the drought, it has taken a quite significant hold in the Merri Creek catchment and beyond.

Chilean Needle Grass is a WONS – A Weed of National Significance - and while its prevalence in Victoria is increasing it has the potential to invade 40 million hectares of southern Australia's areas with 45-100 mm of summer or winter rainfall.

It is known for its extremely sharp needle like seeds which injure stock, particularly sheep as the seed burrows into their fleece and skin and cannot be easily removed.

It also has a devastating effect on agriculture through a significant reduction in pasture productivity, the contamination of crops and hay where it can reduce productivity by 50%, and has highly invasive impacts on native grasslands.

A key feature of CNG is that it seeds profusely.

The main seed head the panicle-(but the grass has three seeding points) develops profusely during spring and can individually produce as many as 22,000 seeds.

In seasons where there is summer rainfall a second seeding period typically comes in autumn.

While unable to travel more than a few metres due to the wind, the seed has an ability to adhere to almost anything including all types of animals, livestock and pets. The seeds are also spread easily by water, by stream flows, runoff or flooding.

The first challenge for landowners and managers is to learn to identify the grass and the best time is in Spring when it produces panicle seeds which have distinctive purple glumes (usually two feathery pieces that surround the seed) with long light green awns (the tip of the seed) that has a nodding habit.

Once identified the challenge then begins.

Failure to take early action on new infestations and allowing it to mature will quickly cause a large and long lived seed bank to develop.

Small infestations can be grubbed by hand and safely destroyed or spot sprayed.

Adequate hygiene is another response particularly by avoiding stock placement in areas which are in seed.

All vehicles which may have come in contact with a seeding infestation should also be cleaned down to avoid transfer. This applies to all types of mobile equipment including farm machinery like slashers and haymaking machines.

Infestations once identified also need continual management as the weed has a very persistent seed bank and may quickly germinate under good seasonal conditions and out-compete desirable grass species.

Chemical control with herbicides is another response and the chemicals fluopropanate and glyphosate are registered for control in most States but extensive reference to registration status and label recommendations is advised.

Introducing or encouraging competition is recommended by sowing a crop or more desirable pasture or grassland species.

There is a lot of information on Chilean Needle Grass that landowners need to be familiar with.

A good start for biology, management and identification can be found at www.weeds.org.au/WONS/Chileanneedlegrass

There are apparently a number of identified infestations in Murrindindi Shire including at Limestone and on the side of the Melba Highway about two kilometres east of Yea township.

Responses planned on a conjunctural or group basis rather than individual approaches are more likely to succeed.

By John Kennedy

WELCOME TO ISSUE 28

If you would like to receive The Granite News by email go to www.highlands.org.au and just subscribe, it is as easy as that!

FIRE PREVENTION PROPERTY INSPECTIONS SIGNIFICANT FINE INCREASES APPLY

Is Fire Prevention Your Responsibility?

If you own property in Strathbogie Shire, this may apply to you.

PROPERTY INSPECTIONS ARE ABOUT TO COMMENCE

During the declared Fire Danger Period, if you own or occupy a property within, or near a built up area, the following applies:

Owners/occupiers are responsible for –

! **Small blocks ie less than 2.6 hectares**, grass must be kept to a maximum height of 100mm.

! **Ground fuels ie. dry grass, twigs, dry leaves and branches** must be kept to a minimum.

! **If the property is over 2.6 hectares**, a minimum of 6 metre boundary break is required.

Council will initially inspect all properties in and around built up areas and may issue a letter bringing to the land owner/occupiers attention if a fire hazard exists.

A follow up inspection will result in a Fire Prevention Notice being served if the fire hazard still exists. If after 14 days action has not occurred to reduce the fire hazard eg. block slashing, Council may issue an Infringement Notice, which carries a fine and undertake the slashing works at the property owners expense.

The fines have been increased this year by CFA for failing to comply with a Fire Prevention Notice by 500%. This means a fine of \$1,408.00

Fines apply to people not complying with the above requirements.

During the declared Fire Danger Period, lighting of fire in the open for burning off is not allowed unless a written permit is obtained from the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer.

More information is available by contacting the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer on 1800 065 993.

COMMUNITY WHAT'S ON CALENDAR - OCTOBER 2012

Week 14th October	TERIP TERIP RECREATION RESERVE Mowing Roster Jim & Jill Davidson Helen & Chris Bradbury
Week 14th October	WHITEHEADS CREEK -TARCOMBE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE TRUCK ROSTER Rod Chisholm Michael Greer
Friday 12th October	'DRINKS ON THE DECK' at Highlands Community Hall from 6.30pm. Bring food to share for a meal together and catch up with friends old and new. All welcome - especially new faces. Gold coin donation to cover power.
Saturday 13th October	IMPORTANT WORKING BEE HIGHLANDS HALL There will be a working bee at the Highlands Hall between 9am & 12 noon to clean up the grounds. We plan to mow, brush cut, prune, & pull out all those weeds. Bring along appropriate garden tools. At midday we will share in a BBQ lunch together & admire our efforts. Please come & join in so that it is fun for everyone & not a burden for a few. For more information contact Judy C: 5796 9247 or Judy R: 5796 9358
13th & 14th October	EUROA COMMUNITY CINEMA "A Separation" – 118 Mins Drama (PG) FIVE STARS – Multi Award winning and "star" of the Sydney Film Festival Now we have gone right out on a limb with this movie. There is not one bad review that I have seen, it is a foreign language film (Iranian) and although subtitles do not suit everyone there are many who enjoy this option in order to see movies with a difference.
Tuesday 16th October	ALEXANDRA LIBRARY an essential part of your community! 5772 0349 Tuesday Show - Sustainable Gardening 1-2 Leap into your spring gardening with an inspiring talk. Do you want to find out about sustainable gardening and organic pest control? Is it a pest or a nutrient deficiency? Do you want to have happy healthy plants that are naturally resistant to pests and disease? Then this is the session for you. The session will focus on reducing the chances of pest and disease problems developing in the garden in the first place by growing healthy vigorous plants.
Friday 19th October	EUROA PERSISTENT PERENNIALS MLA Demo Site Field Day John and Mary Kelly's Farm 198 Heales Rd, Euroa, Vic 8:00 am - 12:00 pm COST: FREE Breakfast Supplied (From 8:00 am - 8:30 am) Register by Wednesday 17th October to Alison Desmond, DPI Benalla P: 03 57611643 alison.desmond@dpi.vic.gov.au
20th & 21st October	SEYMOUR QUILT AND EMBROIDERY SHOW – The 3rd Seymour Anglican, Quilt, embroidery, knitting, crochet, spinning and weaving Fair is coming in October. Calling all craft lovers and those who create wonderful craft items. The Fair is open to many fields and locals and those from afar are invited to display their wares. Quilters, embroiderers, knitters, crochet folk, spinners and weavers, are invited to display their items at the Fair. Entry forms are obtainable from Anne Foote 5796 2447, Betty Catchlove 5792 1220, Fabric's 'n' More shop, Station Street, Seymour and from Diane Grant. 5794 1720 or email: stardust2011!@bigpond.com
Saturday 20th October	TASTES OF THE GOULBURN - 10.00AM - 4.00PM Entrance cost: \$2.00 adults 18 years and over. No charge for children TOTG Glass \$15.00, or recycle last year's glass with a tag for \$7.50. This annual food & wine festival held in Station Street promotes the very best that the region has to offer in wines, produce, foods, crafts and entertainment. This event provides a family friendly atmosphere which promotes Seymour as a tourist destination, where local & regional community groups and businesses can promote their product as well as heritage train rides from Seymour Railway Heritage Centre. The event runs on the same weekend as Seymour
Sunday 21st October	HISTORIC VICTORIAN GARDEN OPENS This is a unique opportunity to visit the 12 acres of historical and National Trust recorded garden at Seven Creeks Estate, near Euroa. The Edna Walling inspired garden together with its Gothic Chapel is to be open for the public for the first time in many years. Seven Creeks Estate was first settled in the 1830's by the family of Eliza Forlonge who purchased the first Saxon Merino sheep to be brought to Australia. The current owners, Ross and Rachael Carrington are generously hosting this garden party, at their home, Seven Creeks Estate. The garden party will raise funds for the Euroa Hospital and Aged Care Accommodation. It will be a gala day, with live music, entertainment, food stalls, plant sales, local produce, jumping castle for the children and much more. Opening times: 10 AM to 4 PM. There is a \$5 donation per head entrance fee. Buses will be running from Euroa township to Seven Creeks Estate. Further information contact Sue Walker on 0438953789
Monday 22nd October	FREE iFARM COMPUTER MAPPING & SOFTWARE. 9:30 am—3:30 pm iFarm 3:30pm—5:00 pm Free Soil Tests, Broadford RSL, 27 Murchison St, BROADFORD 3658 BBQ lunch provided RSVP Wednesday 17th October to: Brad Costin 5784 0609 or Brad.costin@dpi.vic.gov.au There are 19 Spots available for the iFarm course so first in best dressed.
Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th October	ALEXANDRA OPEN GARDENS Just a short drive for Granite News readers will bring you into the magnificent rolling hills and river valleys of the Alexandra district where 14 superb town & farm gardens are open for visitors. Two years of above average rain have resulted in lush spring growth & blossoms. Dry stone walls, views including the landmark Cathedral Mountain, dams, ornamentals, natives, exotics, climbers, espaliers, veggies, compost, no-lawn garden and much more. A special feature this year is the inclusion of the "Town Gardens & Flower Walk" where visitors can enjoy several locations and events all within walking distance of Alexandra. Some gardens offer refreshments, there are quilt displays, a car museum, a garden art sculpture display and performances by "Hot Pans" steel band. Come, Be Inspired! All details on website www.alexandraopengardens.com.au Phone: Mandy 5772 1999.

Classifieds & Community Notices

BLACKBERRY SPRAYING SEASON IS ALMOST HERE

Blackberry was first introduced to Australia in the early 1800's, it has been estimated that it has now spread throughout 8.8 million hectares. Blackberry spreads by seed, rooting of cane tips and suckers. Blackberry not only reduces pasture production it prevents access to waterways and provides harbor for pest animals such as rabbits and foxes. One berry can contain up to 80 seeds which can spread locally or at distance by birds and other animals.

Blackberry is best sprayed when in flower in late November to late February. If conditions are suitable spraying can start in November and continue through to May. Spraying should not continue after the leaves have changed colour or when the plant is under heat stress. Blackberry should not be burnt out on site as a method of control as it can encourage seed germination.

All chemicals used for spraying can be purchased through:

Wales Rural
Wayne Rowe (branch manager)
12 Emily St, Seymour PH: 5792 1088

In order to receive a 50% subsidy from the HCCC you will first need to email or send a request slip for chemicals required (which can be found as a link on the highlands website), once approval has been given you can then purchase the subsidized chemicals from Wales Rural at the discounted price, you must then send or email a copy of your receipt to Simone at hughescreek1@gmail.com.

Alternatively you can send a copy of the receipt to:

Simone Ulstrup
294 Buntings Hill Rd, Ruffly 3666

If you do not email or send in your request prior to purchasing products you will not receive the subsidy.

If you would like a contractor to do your spraying for you please contact one of the following:

John Hammond HighlandsPH:(03)
5796 9310

Hillside Fencing and Spraying contractors Highlands (03) 5796 9192

Tingay Landcare services Avenel PH:
5796 2455

Regional Weed Control Seymour PH:
0404477221

All Terrain Weed Control Euroa PH:
5795 1979

By Simone Ulstrup

FOX AND WILD DOG COLLECTION SCHEDULE OCTOBER 2012

Next round of collection points will be open as follows:

Benalla: Wednesday 10th October
10:30-12:30 FOX ONLY

Broadford: Thursday 11th October
10:30-12:30 FOX ONLY

Mansfield: Wednesday 10th October
2:30-4:30 FOX AND WILD DOG

For terms and conditions please visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au

BOOK REVIEW

The Dons – Archimede Fusillo

Paul Taranto is sixteen and trying to make sense of his Italian heritage, the death of his father 5 years previously and whether Tracey Reynolds likes him or not. Most importantly though he is trying to understand why his Nonno is losing his mind. This is an excellent read exploring cultural differences, the memories of an old man and the aspirations of his grandson. Although they are related it seems that they inhabit two different worlds, until one night when Nonno disappears and Paul discovers that they have more in common than he could ever have imagined. By Pauline Roberts

AMNESTY SUPPORTS FIRE PREVENTION EFFORTS

Murrindindi Shire Council is supporting residents and landholders in residential areas in their efforts to be fire ready, by putting in place a burning off amnesty period and providing free green waste disposal at all Resource Recovery Centres (Transfer Stations).

From Friday 29 September until Monday 15 October residents and landholders will be able to burn vegetation materials in residential areas without a permit.

Council's General Manager Sustainability Michael Chesworth said there were conditions to the amnesty including keeping fires to a metre in diameter and height. It is about working together to ensure that we clean up, but have minimal impacts on neighbours."

To use the green waste service you will need to present your tip ID tag or provide a current rates notice to prove eligibility to the site attendants. The free offer does not apply to commercial clearing and maintenance operators. Inquiries regarding the amnesty can be directed to Council's Local Laws unit on 0408 576 712 or 5772 0376.

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Do you know someone outstanding?

Have you thought about nominating them for an Australia Day award?

Nominations are open in the following categories:

Murrindindi Citizen of the Year

Murrindindi Young Citizen of the Year

Murrindindi Community Event of the Year

These awards provide all Shire of Murrindindi residents with the opportunity to pay tribute to our outstanding local achievers. Please download the nomination form from our website www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au or call Kat James on 5772 0341. Nominations close at 5pm on Friday 9 November 2012

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YEA SKATE and BMX COMPETITION

Some of the state's best skateboarders and BMX riders are expected to converge on Yea with the town selected to host the North Western League Skate & BMX competition.

The North Western League is one of two league series that make up the Victorian Amateur Titles for skateboarding. This series is sanctioned by the Victorian Skateboarding Association, the State Sporting Association for Skateboarding and provides a platform for young people to gain necessary experience to compete nationally and internationally.

The Murrindindi Shire Council FReeZA program has attracted the event to the shire. It will take place on Saturday 27 October at the Yea Skate Park.

Not only will some of the state's best boarders and riders be in the region, young people from across Murrindindi and neighbouring shires can participate with four age group categories including: 12 & under, 16 & under, Open males, Open females. All categories are available for competitors in BMX and/or Skate with great prizes.

All young people under 18 years interested in competing need to have a registration form signed by a parent or guardian. The registration form can be handed in on the day with your gold coin entry fee.

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