

35. Weeding out unwanted visitors

Aim

Students apply their understanding of weeds by preparing a community awareness-raising article for a newspaper.

Materials

- Resource sheet 35: The ten most common weeds in parks.
- Resource sheet 9: Issues in park management (see Section 1).
- References for weeds including plant books, local Council brochures on weeds, Department of Natural Resources and Environment pamphlets and website, CD ROMS and gardening publications.

Activity

1. Your task as environmental reporter is to write an article for a local newspaper which encourages community support for weed removal from a local national park and adjacent areas.

Your article will also include the first of a weekly feature 'Weed of the Week'.

In a newspaper article, each paragraph focuses on one particular point. The format usually includes an attention grabbing headline and a series of small columns.

Your article should contain the following information:

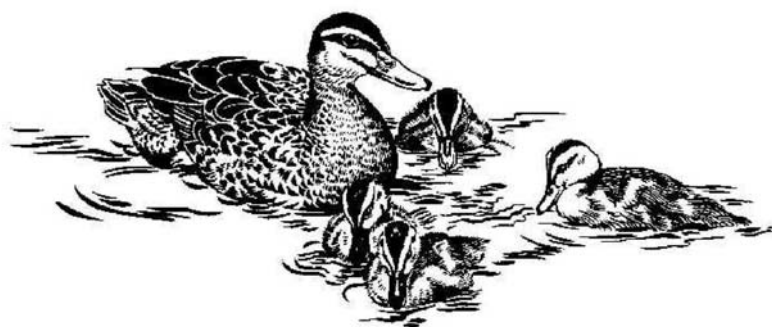
- an attention grabbing headline
- major problems facing the local national park due to weeds
- weed definition
- problems that weeds cause
- source of weeds
- major weeds in the Park
- how the local community can help.

2. The second part of the article focuses on a selected weed. Choose a weed from the list in the Resource sheet 35: The ten most common weeds.

You will need to undertake research on the selected weed.

Your article should include the following points:

- name of the weed
- origin of the weed
- features/characteristics of the weed - height, flowers, fruit, leaves
- diagram or photo of the weed
- areas the weed invades
- why the weed is a problem
- weed removal techniques
- any other relevant information
- name of next week's 'Weed of the Week'.



35. The ten most common weeds in parks

Introduced weeds are one of the major threats to national parks.

A weed is classified as 'any non-indigenous (i.e. not originally occurring) species which invades or prevents regeneration of native vegetation'.

Many of the problem plants spread from residential gardens, neglected farms, tracks and roadsides. Some people plant 'weeds' in their gardens not realising that these garden plants can escape as wind or bird dispersed seeds and germinate in nearby national parks.

The overall result is that habitat for our wildlife is being reduced and our natural environments threatened.

In order to tackle this major problem, people living near parks need to be able to identify and know how to remove the weeds that are invasive in national parks.

Community programs include weeding days in national parks which give local residents the opportunity to identify some weeds, try removal techniques and increase their understanding of the impact of weeds. Local residents are also encouraged to remove problem plants from their gardens.

The ten most common weeds in parks:

Trees

Sweet Pittosporum *Pittosporum undulatum*

Shrubs

Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus*

Paterson's Curse *Echium plantagineum*

Gorse *Ulex europaeus*

African Boxthorn *Lycium ferocissimum*

Sweet Briar *Rosa rubiginosa*

Climbers/Creepers

Bridal Creeper *Asparagus asparagoides*

Grasses/Herbs

Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare*

Horehound *Marrubium vulgare*

St Johns Wort *Hypericum perforatum*



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