



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group



## Newsletter October, 2016

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### ***Next Meeting: Charles Grech: Weed Control Expert Weed Infestations to be a critical issue this year?***

***What to do!***

***Balliang Hall***

***7.30pm Thursday October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016***

Charles Grech has a background in Agricultural Science with a PhD in grazing management and weed control, specifically Serrated Tussock, Chilean Needle Grass and integrated chemical control strategies for these and other weeds.

He has a wealth of hands-on experience with a range of weed control techniques from working on national field trials at DPI (including our local Western Grasslands Reserve) and he continues to conduct private research and consult on land management solutions.

Charles will cover the most effective weed control options with an emphasis on how to improve your success and land productivity— spray application rates and timing, establishing competitive crops, grazing management vs burning and simple vehicle hygiene.

The Group is also interested in finding out about your individual weed problems and what YOU as members would like to learn about weed control.

Please direct any queries or examples of your specific problems to Neil Day by email and we will try to find out from Charles and other members on the night.

## Weed Crisis coming this year?

Following several years of dry springs/summer seasons, we have just had our second wettest September on record. How has this affected weeds?

Serrated Tussock is still the most serious weed problem in our area and Chilean Needle Grass is an emerging issue and can be difficult to identify when not seeding. We have a small time window of several weeks - usually end of October to the start of November - to identify infestations and prevent Chilean Needle Grass from spreading. A relatively small effort and dollars now can prevent considerable cost in the future.

Chilean Needle Grass is a member of the *Nassella* (needle grass) family and many control measures are similar to other *Nassella* species such as Serrated Tussock, but there are a few important differences.

For instance, Chilean Needle Grass is particularly nasty as the needles penetrate deep into sheep wool and skin and it has additional asexual seeds inside the stems and in the tussock itself. Therefore, it does not just rely on seed pollination to reproduce: slashing or grazing can readily spread it.

## Green Army invades Balliang!

On Tuesday, 4th October the Green Army, a group of young conservation volunteers led by Nick Bouma, generously helped out with weed control and replacement planting of trees at the Balliang Reserve, behind the Hall and Anglican Church. The group arrived, well rugged up in their purpose designed mini-bus equipped with all the tools of the tree planters' and weed controllers' trade ... including, most importantly, mugs of tea and hot coffee!

Despite the freezing conditions, the large group spent several hours hard at work. They chipped out the serrated tussock which has crept into the grass on the oval, and did a sterling job of replacing trees and strengthening guards.

Many thanks to Elissa Ashton-Smith from the Geelong Landcare Network for putting us in touch with this great group of conservation workers.



Oscar Nitz demonstrates superb soil compression technique guaranteeing survival of replacement tree.



Nick Bouma (in red) and his merry band of tree planters hard at work.



Fashions in the field? Kate Martin, Teagan Armstrong and Jacqui Ball show great stake hammering coordination. Note the long string of black plastic pots indicating the number of trees this group had planted!