

TASWEEDS

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Editors for this edition:
Sandy Leighton, Karen
Stewart, Helen Sims

Edition 28

September 2005

INCORPORATING
SPOTTER



Dr Dennis Ivor Morris DSc
1924 – 2005



A word from the President...

This year is a special year for both the Tasmanian Weed Society (TWS) and weed management in Tasmania; it is the 10th Anniversary of the TWS. To celebrate our 10th anniversary, to hear about the decade of change in weed management in Tasmania, and to look ahead to what the next 10 years holds, TWS will be holding its first State conference in Launceston on 13th and 14th October 2005 (but of course you all knew that already!). Without doubt the organising of this event has been the primary activity over the last few months and you can read all about the conference and our generous sponsors elsewhere in this edition of Tasweeds. However, I would like to take this opportunity to issue a personal invitation to all members and their associates to attend this exciting event.

No doubt as you read this edition of Tasweeds and its usual array of interesting articles and bits and pieces about everything weedy you might like to consider making a contribution yourself, even if it is a snippet of information or your thoughts and views. So much is happening in Tasmania in terms of weed management (see our conference program for a taste - www.tasweeds.org) and Tasweeds is an ideal vehicle through which to share what you are doing.

Finally the sad news that one of the State's most respected scientists and honorary botanist at the Tasmanian Herbarium, Dr Dennis Morris, recently died after a long illness. Dennis was an iconic weeds figure in Tasmania and nationally. His latter profile was recognised nationally by the Council of Australian Weed Science Societies through its awarding of the CAWSS Medal for Leadership to Dennis in 1999. TWS extends its condolences to Dennis' family.

Andrew Bishop
President

Journeyman86@bigpond.com



One of Dennis Morris's excellent line drawings

AN EXCEPTIONAL MAN

Dr Dennis Ivor Morris DSc

1924 – 2005

(by Matt Baker, Tasmanian Herbarium)

The Tasmanian Herbarium is saddened to report the passing of Dennis Morris after a courageous and dignified battle with illness. Dennis was an honorary member of staff at the Tasmanian Herbarium for over 30 years, and during this time authored many texts on Tasmanian botany (for example, *The Students Flora of Tasmania*, with Winifred Curtis and the *Tasmanian Weed Handbook*, with Brian Hyde-Wyatt) and numerous scientific papers. His contribution as a scientist and specialist of grasses and exotic flora has been enormous. Dennis' botanical achievements, and more particularly his significant contribution to the field of Tasmanian Botany was recognised recently in December 2003 when he was bestowed an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree by the University of Tasmania. Edition 21 of *Tasweeds* includes an article congratulating Dennis on this achievement and discusses Dennis' botanical career.

Dennis had many admirable qualities. He had a fantastic ability to stay cool in what to others would be pressure situations. For instance when VIP's visited the Herbarium his no stress attitude and witty remarks would instantly break down barriers making us realise that we are, after all, the same. He was also a great believer in learning something new everyday. A foot thick Dictionary dating from early 1900's, nicknamed *The Book of Morris*, would get a work over by Dennis at nearly every morning tea. At the end of day he would often ask me in a sincere manner, "What have you learnt today?" He didn't mind if that something I had learned seemed insignificant or otherwise, just as long as I was using my brain.

Dennis was able to draw upon an amazing bank of knowledge that he had built upon since childhood. Not only did he have a fantastic ability to recognise and identify plants, both native and exotic, he could explain in a very concise manner how they differed from related and similar looking species. The penny dropped often in discussions with Dennis. Dennis' memory did not just relate to botanical information. At the Herbarium tearoom table, Dennis would need little prompting to tell humorous stories from his childhood and working life. These stories would read as far-fetched fictitious novels complete with the colourful accents of the characters involved. One could almost see themselves in the story watching as the events unfolded.

Dennis had an exceptional eye for detail and an incredibly steady hand. These attributes were obvious in his fine botanical line drawings. Dennis' illustrations have been used throughout his and other's botanical works to display plants in ways in which words struggle to achieve.



Dennis doing what he loved.

Dennis was cherished and greatly admired by all of his colleagues at the Herbarium. He will be missed very much and will be thought of often. As our personal memories of Dennis fade with time, his contributions to the understanding of Tasmania's flora will remain forever as foundations for others to learn from and to build upon. Dennis' friends at the Herbarium would like to offer their deepest sympathy to his family and thank God for the time we had with him.

WEED RESEARCH

Organic Weed Management Research – websites to visit

Alistair MacKinnon, Community Landcare Coordinator, Northern NRM region

The world wide web provides many sources of current research into integrated weed management. The following article provides some useful websites to visit for non chemical techniques used in a variety of organic systems.

Agronomic and economic evaluation of weed management methods in organic herb and vegetable production systems

Paul Kristiansen, Brian Sindel and Robin Jessop – School of Rural Science and Agriculture, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351

www.une.edu.au Email pkristia@une.edu.au , bsindel@metz.une.edu.au , rjessop@metz.une.edu.au

Abstract

Weed management is reported to be a major constraint in organic agriculture. Organic growers also report a lack of information about non-chemical weed control. A series of field trials was conducted in lettuce (*Lactuca sativa* L.) and echinacea (*Echinacea purpurea* (L.) Moench) crops to evaluate a range of weed control methods commonly used in organic herb and vegetable production systems. The criteria for evaluating the methods were weed growth, crop yield and cost effectiveness.

Hand weeding, tillage and organic mulches (hay and pelletised paper) were effective to very effective at suppressing weeds. In general, good weed suppression was correlated with good crop yields; however, crop yields were reduced by tillage and paper mulch. Deducting the cost of the weed control method from the gross crop value caused a greater re-ranking of the treatment performance in lettuce than in echinacea. This is partly due to the different growing season lengths and market prices of the two test crops. The most cost effective methods for managing weeds in lettuce were tillage and hand weeding. When weed competition is low, the unweeded control treatment was also cost effective. In echinacea, hand weeding and hay mulch were consistently the most cost effective methods for managing weeds.

Source: <http://www.regional.org.au/au/asa/2003/c/13/kristiansen.htm>

Farmers are addressing the problem of herbicide-resistant ryegrass in dryland

agriculture by adopting a system of integrated weed management (IWM) that allows weed control with a range of chemical and non-chemical methods. One of the non-chemical practices being considered is green manuring, which provides highly effective weed control, increased nutrient availability in the following year and improved soil organic matter. On the other hand, the loss of a year's production involves a short-term economic sacrifice. In this study, the trade-offs between the effective weed control and biological benefits provided by green manuring as well as the large short-term economic losses associated with this practice are investigated for various rotations and patterns of herbicide use.

Source: <http://agspsrv34.agric.wa.gov.au/cropupdates/2000/weeds/Monjardino.htm>

Organic Interceptor Weedkiller (innovative organic weed control service provider)

<http://www.organicinterceptor.com.au/agricultural2.html>

Non-chemical weed control (for citrus trees)

Weed matting

Weed matting is a woven polypropylene material that is used to cover the soil surface to prevent weed growth. Weed matting allows passage of water and air but excludes light from the soil surface, preventing weed germination. It is widely used in the nursery industry and has been successfully used to a limited extent in citrus groves to eliminate weed competition without the use of herbicides.

Mulching

Mulching around trees with organic materials such as straw, rice hulls or compost will assist in suppressing weeds by excluding light from the soil surface. Mulch will also help retain moisture in the topsoil by reducing surface evaporation, as well as moderating soil surface temperatures. The mulch should not be in contact with the trunks of the trees, as this can provide a site for pests and diseases to attack the tree — the bark becomes soft and vulnerable to cold and to attack by pest and disease if it is covered by moist organic matter.

Cultivation

Alternatively the tree lines could be cultivated. However, when the soil is moist, cultivation can lead to smearing at the bottom of the ploughed layer, resulting in a barrier to root growth. There is also the risk of bringing up weed seeds when the soil is disturbed.

Source: <http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/citrus/cit-caring-young-trees.htm#Non>

Flame Weeding references link:

<http://www.une.edu.au/agronomy/agssystem/organic/library/flame.html>

The Human Dimensions of Integrated Weed Management

<http://www1.crcsalinity.com.au/newsletter/SeaNews/dpap0204.htm>



Mechanical control - gorse mulcher in action in the midlands (Photo: TIAR)

Weed Society of Victoria - new website

The Weed Society of Victoria has a new website. It is www.wsvic.org.au.

Ros Shepherd
Secretary, Weed Society of Victoria
PO Box 987, Frankston, Vic 3199
Ph/fax 03 9576 2949
email secwssv@surf.net.au

PROGRESS ON THE GROUND

Wellington Park Bushcare Group - weeds under threat

Peter Franklin, Wellington Park Bushcare group

Gorse gave birth to the formation of the Wellington Park Bushcare Group. It all started when some gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) was noticed growing on an abandoned fire trail and into the edge of the bushland. It was at an altitude of 950 metres and not far below the summit of Collins Cap in Wellington Park.



Gorse removal in Wellington Park

Although thought to be only a small task, it was assumed that it would not be at the top of priorities for the Parks and Wildlife Service, who are responsible for managing the area. "We should offer to tackle the outbreak" were the thoughts of Jean Taylor, John Hamilton and Peter Franklin, and this was taken up by the park managers.

It took two trips to clear the gorse and pockets of Spanish heath *Erica lusitanica* discovered nearby. Some members of the Australian Plant Society, along with bushwalking friends, helped and after such a successful venture, there was an urge to do more and thus the Wellington Park Bushcare Group was formed.

That all took place in early 2002 and since then we have formed links with the Hobart and Glenorchy City Councils as well as the Wellington Park Management Trust and Parks and Wildlife Service. The group spends a day each month on a working bee at various locations in the park, mostly getting rid of Spanish heath, gorse and broom.

Attendance on working bees varies from four or five up to a dozen people and, despite some infestations looking quite daunting, at the end of the day surprise is often expressed about how much has been achieved. This is greatly helped by the three or four Hobart City Council bush crew who work with us when a working bee is in their part of the park.

We have managed to strike up a good relationship with the council staff looking after fire breaks and this has resulted in a coordination of our work and the Council weed spraying programme. Transend have also come to the party by spraying outbreaks under power line easements.

Wellington Park Bushcare Group has been successful in obtaining two Envirofund grants. The first of these was in 2003 to rehabilitate priority sites by targeting an area which posed threats to the biodiversity values on the mountain, namely weed areas on track sides which are providing infestation sources for deeper into the reserve. This project included undertaking weed mapping across the park, building on existing data and focusing efforts on



Happy Bushcarers and a large pile of gorse

removing prioritised isolated weed infestations. The latest is to rehabilitate and protect a highly significant population of the threatened *Epacris acuminata* over an area of approximately 25-30ha which is at risk from invading Spanish heath, and also target two strategic areas of native vegetation (0.7 ha and 0.6Ha respectively) for rehabilitation, by removing gorse. Funds have also been made available to develop a standard operating procedure to address weed removal activities, machinery hygiene and access, thus reducing the risk of weeds spreading.

We have managed to get a grant from the Australian Government to purchase equipment such as safety items, first aid packs and good quality tools to make our work easier and safer. You can catch up with the current working bees of the group by visiting the web site <http://home.iprimus.com.au/pjfranklin/wellington>

Maatsuyker Island - Blackberry blitz

from National Blackberry Program newsletter (Issue 3 June 2005)

Other than Macquarie Island, Maatsuyker Island is Australia's southernmost inhabited island. Located 10km south of the heart of Tasmania's wild southern coastline, it comprises a mere 180 hectares, yet it is home to seals, 800,000 pairs of short tailed shearwaters, many other sea birds, and a lighthouse.

The Friends of Maatsuyker Island, in co-operation with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, commenced a major blackberry eradication program on the island in November 2004. Nine volunteers joined the two island caretakers for the thirteen day working bee. The group had to contend with extensive rookeries that limited movement, although the timing coincided with the pre egg-laying exodus of the local mutton birds.

Blackberry work was confined to around the lighthouse facilities and away from the major rookeries. GIS-based maps of the infestations were generated and monitoring points were established to assess control efforts. Several different management methods were applied to the blackberries depending on the nature of the infestation, the presence of native flora and fauna, water courses, and so on. Where a relatively small, isolated infestation was found, it was controlled by 'cut and paint' and grubbing. Extensive infestations under native canopies were slashed to improve access and to allow for follow-up herbicide control. Re-treatment a few days later of 'cut and painted' areas proved useful in identifying canes that were unwilted to ensure complete treatment.

The group plans to undertake further blackberry mapping and management on the island, in the rookery areas that could not be accessed in November due to the bird nesting period. Meanwhile, follow-up treatment was undertaken in February 2005; good reports of acceptable levels of control in the treated areas have been forthcoming. This project has been funded by the NHT's Envirofund and the Tasmanian Wildcare Program. It has been undertaken in co-operation with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.



Wild Weeders - winter WoNS work 2005

Jamie Cooper and Greg Stewart



Egg Island before Boneseed removal

The “Wild Weeders” have recently returned from another successful mission on Flinders Island, where bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) and asparagus fern (*Asparagus scandens*) were treated. This year a team of six, with assistance from Parks & Wildlife Service and DPIWE Weed section, covered 650ha over 10 days, contributing over 500 hours of volunteer time. The team, with the assistance of legendary local weed-basher Wayne Warren or the “pink panther” as he is now known, crawled, bashed and climbed across the island to treat the infestations. All known sites were controlled and surveillance undertaken in the area

surrounding the infestations. Bridal creeper, a Weed of National Significance (WoNS), is a deciduous plant that dies back in summer and produces fresh vigorous growth during winter prior to the flowering period in spring. The ideal time for treatment is May to September.

Control of bridal creeper on Flinders Island is a National priority as it may potentially cause the loss of a number of species over the next decade or so. This is the second year that the group has undertaken the control program. The results to date are excellent, with plant biomass being reduced by an estimated 75%. Total eradication is feasible within the next decade, so long as the program is maintained and provision of support (financial and in-kind) is continued.

The “Wild Weeders” group was formed a couple of years ago, to undertake strategic control efforts on weed threats to biodiversity and have since been involved in a number of projects. It is comprised of individuals from a range of backgrounds who are prepared to donate their time for high priority weed control. The team used the mighty yacht *Valhalla* to transport equipment and some personnel from Bridport to Flinders Island, substantially reducing transport costs.

The effort from the team was outstanding with little time for recovery. Jason, our ex Taronga Park Zoo keeper, caused a bit of stir at the local hotel when he decided to put his foot up after a fairly productive day. He



Egg Island after Boneseed removal

removed it and sat it on the bench next to him (even amputees are Wild Weeders). This year, to highlight the control program, we used a digital video camera to collect about 7 hours of footage which is currently being edited. A DVD will be produced outlining aspects of the eradication program and control efforts involved and it will be used for monitoring purposes.

In addition to the work undertaken on Flinders Island we were able to call in to Long Island in Franklin Sound on which an infestation of gorse (*Ulex europaeus*)(WoNS) is still present. The gorse was initially controlled in 2003 by a team of volunteers including a few of the Wild Weeders members and a number of control options were employed at the site ranging from application of Metsulphuron-S-Methyl(Brushkiller®)by handgun, to cut and paint techniques using glyphosate. It was interesting to observe the effects of the treatments since 2003 and the recorded footage will be included on the proposed DVD.

The group also has been involved in a project to control boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*) (WoNS) on Egg Island, situated in the Tamar River near Hillwood. The island is a Pacific Gull breeding site and dense infestations of boneseed covered approximately 85% of the island. The Wild Weeders using the cut and paint method and hand-pulling, have cleared 80% of the mature boneseed plants. Another working bee is planned for late September 2005. This will complete the removal of the flowering plants with follow up control on seedlings required annually until the viable seed-bank is exhausted.



Accessing Bridal creeper sites can be a bit challenging!

Tasmanian Weedbuster Week Awards 2005

- last call for nominations!

Application form & further information – see <http://www.tasweeds.org/>

WEED ALERTS

Erica scoparia L. Besom Heath (Ericaceae)

Matthew Baker, Tasmanian Herbarium

Erica scoparia belongs to a group of *Erica* species that occur naturally in Southern and Western Europe. This group is geographically isolated from the extremely diverse group found in South Africa. The species is native to SW Europe, extending eastward to Italy and northward to France. In its native range it prefers acidic soils.

Description

An erect evergreen shrub up to 3 m high, commonly 1.5–2 m.

Stems very finely pubescent, becoming glabrous with age.

Leaves erect to spreading in closely spaced whorls of 3, linear, 3–7 mm long, 0.7–1 mm wide, with minute hairs grouped at the apex; margins revolute, concealing more than two thirds of the undersurface; petiole c. 1 mm long, appressed to the stem.

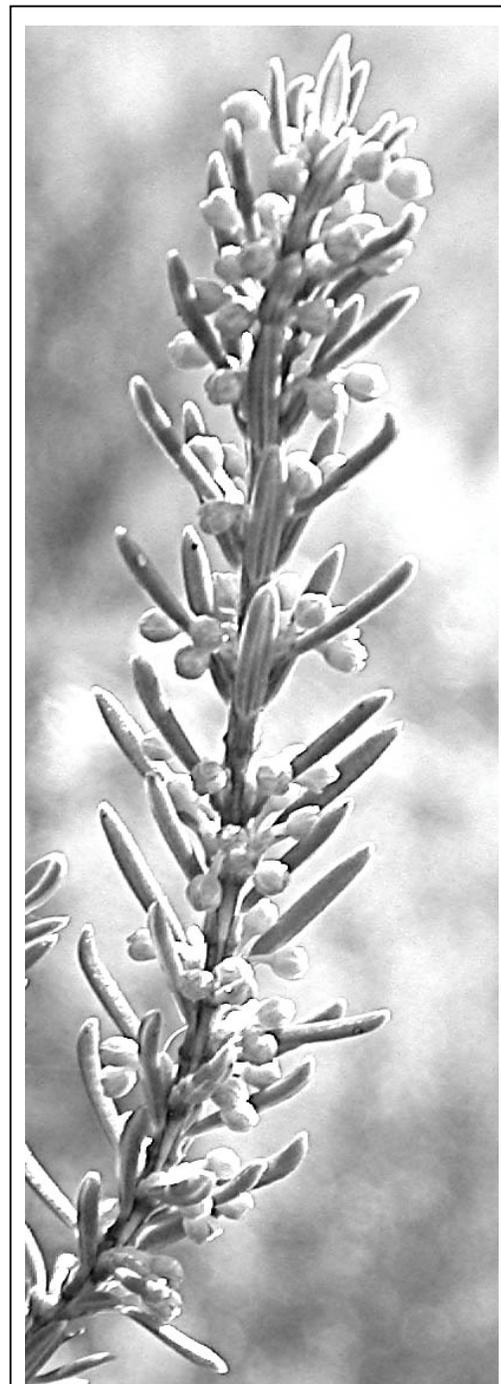
Flowers with sepals and petals 4-lobed, green, becoming brown with age, solitary or in clusters in the axils of leaves; pedicels to 2 mm long; bracteoles 3, inserted about half way along the pedicel; calyx c. 1 mm long, joined for less than half its length with lobes ovate; corolla campanulate to globular, 1.5–2 mm long, with deltoid lobes about half as long as the tube; stamens included in the corolla; style shortly exerted from the corolla, with stigma capitate. **Fruit** a globose capsule containing numerous, very fine seeds.



Branch of *Erica scoparia*
with mature flowers

Erica scoparia is known to occur as a weed only in Tasmania. It is naturalised in the Bridgenorth/Rosevale area (NW of Launceston) and a few plants have been recorded near Carrick. It is most abundant along roadsides in this area where it has spread into both grassland and bushland in similar proportions to its well-known cousin *Erica lusitanica* (Spanish Heath). *Erica scoparia* reproduces by seed that is very fine and would be easily transported by water and on roadworks equipment.

Erica scoparia was first collected in Tasmania in 1968 but was not



Flowering branch of *Erica scoparia*

identified as such until a subsequent collection was made in 1983. It is a particularly boring shrub with little ornamental value. The flowers are tiny and insignificant, even en masse. This has probably limited its spread throughout the world as an ornamental species and subsequently limited its opportunity to become a weed.

Erica scoparia is not a declared weed in Tasmania. There are no legal requirements to manage it. However, its ability to persist where it is and to invade bushland is alarming. Given the chance it is likely to become more common as a weed in the State.



STRATEGIES and PLANNING

NRM Regional Roundup

All three NRM regions are gearing up to call for expressions of interest from service providers to deliver the regional weed strategy component from their Regional Investment Proposals. Each region is looking to employ a Regional Weed Strategy Coordinator (or similar) to assist with the delivery of priority actions identified in their respective regional weed strategies. In addition each region will have a budget for priority on-ground works.

Defeating the Weed Menace funding

New national weed initiative. The next round of the Australian Government's Defeating the Weed Menace funding will be announced shortly (September 2005). This funding targets Weeds of National Significance (WoNS), Weeds on the National Environmental Alert List and priority sleeper weed species focusing on eradication, research and community awareness.

Information on the national priorities for action for each WoNS are available at <http://www.weeds.org.au/natsig.htm> and follow the WoNS links.
WoNS Information: <http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/wons.html>

Contact Sandy.Leighton@dpiwe.tas.gov.au for more details.

EDUCATION and AWARENESS

The National Asparagus Weeds Workshop

Plant Research Centre Auditorium , Waite Campus Adelaide

November 10th and 11th 2005

The workshop will bring together scientists and land managers targeting bridal creeper and other *Asparagus* weeds. Recent advances in biocontrol, herbicides, ecology, impacts, taxonomy, detection and regional management will be presented. Workshop sessions will enable interactions between scientists and managers to determine future research directions and define current best practice management. The field trip will show biocontrol, eradication and containment activities within the Adelaide region.



Download workshop brochure from <http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/bridalcreeper/>

For further information contact -

Dennis Gannaway

National Bridal Creeper Management Coordinator

Tel. (08) 8303 9748

Mob. 0428 100 951

Email gannaway.dennis@saugov.sa.gov.au

Weedbuster Week - plan your event

8-15 October 2005

Register your event now at <http://www.weeds.org.au> and follow the links
Further information - see <http://www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au/weeds> and follow the links

Weed Wipeout

(http://www.weeds.crc.org.au/for_schools/weedwipeout_flash.html)



What's fun to play, but at the same time enables students to learn about managing weeds? WEED WIPEOUT, the new online interactive computer game from the Weeds CRC.

Weed Wipeout is an interactive game where the player is in a position of managing a farm with some weed problems. The player is required to make decisions regarding the most appropriate weed management strategy, and then discovers the results of these decisions. Humorous and unexpected events appear, keeping the job at hand very interesting.

The game simulates real life with the player using their bank account to deal with the weed problems on the farm. Players are exposed to problems such as build up of herbicide resistance, the costs and time involved in managing weeds and other problems that are associated with managing a farm. This game was developed with purpose of providing a fun and enjoyable way to learn about weed management.

Lord of the Weeds competition

(http://www.weeds.crc.org.au/for_schools/competition.html)

The Weeds CRC has designed this competition, including all resources (such as suggested lesson activities, student proformas to guide students through writing the report, marking guide and appropriate contacts for teachers to use). This way, finding a weedy area in the school or local area should be the only difficult thing to do.

The competition was written with the purpose of enabling students to:

- develop a sense of ownership and pride in their school environment/local area by designing solutions to identified environmental problems
- be in the running to **WIN \$1000** to be used by their school as the school determines

This competition requires students to design a strategy to manage weeds in the school, or in the local area.

The Lord of the Weeds Competition will run again in 2006. Registration for the competition will be required by the 24th May 2006, and the student reports are due by the 1st August 2006.

For further information contact:

Susanna Greig Education Officer, Weeds CRC, Tel: (02) 6773 2809, Fax: (02) 6773 3238

STOP PRESS

Sponsorship available to attend 1st Tas Weeds Conference

The national WoNS Coordinators are sponsoring three community volunteers to attend the 1st Tasmanian Weeds Conference (13-14 October 2005) in Launceston. See application form included in this newsletter.

Applications close 30th September 2005

TWS NEWS

Cindy Hanson moves on - from Weeds to Biosecurity

It was with regret that the DPIWE Weed Section bid farewell to Cindy Hanson recently. Cindy had been with the weed section for approximately five years and made excellent contributions firstly as the Tasmanian Weed Education officer (including Weedbuster Week) and then as Weed Management Planning officer. In the latter position, amongst other things, Cindy developed all of the Statutory Weed Management Plans for Tasmania's declared weeds and set in place the process for new declarations.

Cindy now works as a Policy Analyst for the Biosecurity Policy Branch, DPIWE and has expanded her horizons to include weeds, pests and diseases. Congratulations Cindy and all the best in your new position.



Cindy's new contact details are:

Cindy Hanson
Policy Analyst, Biosecurity Policy Branch
Department of Primary Industries, Water and
Environment, Tasmania
Mt Pleasant Laboratories
Kings Meadows TAS 7249

e-mail : Cindy.Hanson@dpiwe.tas.gov.au

Ph : 03 6336 5414

Fax : 03 6336 5374

Call for articles - Tasweeds needs you!

Articles are needed for the December 2005 edition of Tasweeds. We encourage you to write an article about a local weed activity in your area or by your group, some interesting weed research, updates on progress with strategy implementation or education and awareness. A one-page article with photos included would be great.

Email to: Cindy.Hanson@dpiwe.tas.gov.au or Sandy.Leighton@dpiwe.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Weeds Conference - update

The Tasmanian Weed Society executive has been busy planning the 1st Tasmanian Weeds Conference. The conference will be held on the 13 & 14 October 2005 at the Launceston Tram Sheds Function Centre. The field trip will be action packed and includes visiting the Launceston Cataract Gorge, Lilydale area and Bishopsbourne to view and discuss current weed works/ programs and partnerships. The MC for our trip will be the ever-enthusiastic Jamie Cooper (DPIWE Regional Weed Management Officer, North), so we will be inspired if not exhausted by the end of the day!

THE 1st TASMANIAN WEED CONFERENCE

A DECADE OF CHANGE

- a celebration of the 10 yr.
anniversary of the TWS.

13–14 OCT 2005
Launceston Tram Sheds
Function Centre



A WeedBuster Week Event

For registration forms or for more information visit: www.tasweeds.org
Email: Secretary@tasweeds.org ● Ph: (03) 6421 7654

THE 1st TASMANIAN WEED CONFERENCE

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