

Impact Assessment Record

Scientific Name: *Retama raetam* (Forssk.) Webb

Common name: white weeping broom

QUESTION	COMMENTS	RATING	CONFIDENCE
Social			
1. Restrict human access?	“May infest grazing land and prevent access to stock” (CRC Weed Management, 2003), making access by people difficult.	MH	M
2. Reduce tourism?	As an invader of “scrub and woodland on coastal, sandy soils” (Csurhes & Edwards, 1998), this xerophytic plant (see photo in CRC Weed Management, 2003) would not be obvious to the average visitor.	L	M
3. Injurious to people?	Although it is toxic, “the plant is not usually eaten, its bitter taste repels animals...There are no characteristic legions” (El Bahri et al, 1999). The taste is likely to deter people from eating the plant and it doesn’t appear to irritate the skin.	L	H
4. Damage to cultural sites?	Although not obvious to the average visitor (see Q. 2), for people more familiar with cultural sites, this 3m high and 6m wide plant (CRC Weed Management, 2003) may have a moderate visual effect.	ML	M
Abiotic			
5. Impact flow?	Terrestrial species known to invade “scrub and woodland on coastal, sandy soils” Csurhes & Edwards, 1998).	L	MH
6. Impact water quality?	Terrestrial species known to invade “scrub and woodland on coastal, sandy soils” Csurhes & Edwards, 1998).	L	MH
7. Increase soil erosion?	This plant has a “shallow and deep root system” and its “cladodes...are effective in capturing and retaining soil.” Being “poisonous and unpalatable animals avoid walking or grazing on its cladodes” (El-Bana et al, 2003) would also assist reduces erosion locally. However, since the plant can “form a scrub layer that can outcompete and shade out native plants,” if these plants are destroyed by fire (CRC Weed Management, 2003) large areas of bare soil may be exposed, increasing the risk of erosion.	ML	M
8. Reduce biomass?	Where <i>R. raetam</i> shades and outcompetes native vegetation (CRC Weed Management, 2003), direct replacement of biomass is likely to occur.	ML	M
9. Change fire regime?	“It can...increase the severity of bushfire if it dies off in large stands” (CRC Weed Management, 2003).	ML	M
Community Habitat			
10. Impact on composition (a) high value EVC	EVC=Shallow Sands Woodland (E), CMA= Glenelg-Hopkins, Bioreg.=Gippsland Plain, CLIMATE=VH. This 3m tall x 6m wide shrub “form[s] a scrub layer that can outcompete and shade out native plants” and invades scrub and woodlands (CRC Weed Management, 2003). Major displacement of some dominant species within different layers.	MH	M
(b) medium value EVC	EVC=Woorinen Sands Mallee (D), CMA= Mallee, Bioreg.=Murray Mallee, CLIMATE=VH. This 3m tall x 6m wide shrub “form[s] a scrub layer that can outcompete and shade out native plants” and invades scrub and woodlands (CRC Weed Management, 2003). Major displacement of some dominant species within different layers.	MH	M

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(c) low value EVC	EVC=Loamy Sands Mallee (Lc), CMA= Mallee, Bioreg.=Murray Mallee, CLIMATE=VH. This 3m tall x 6m wide shrub “form[s] a scrub layer that can outcompete and shade out native plants” and invades scrub and woodlands (CRC Weed Management, 2003). Major displacement of some dominant species within different layers.	MH	M
11. Impact on structure?	This 3m tall x 6m wide shrub “form[s] a scrub layer that can outcompete and shade out native plants” and invades scrub and woodlands (CRC Weed Management, 2003). It is likely to have a major impact on the ground and understorey and shrub layers, but less of an impact on the tree layer.	MH	M
12. Effect on threatened flora?	No information found.	MH	L
Fauna			
13. Effect on threatened fauna?	No information found.	MH	L
14. Effect on non-threatened fauna?	As an unpalatable shrub (El-bana et al, 2003) that invades and outcompetes native understorey and shrub species, its presence may reduce the food available to fauna.	MH	H
15. Benefits fauna?	As a large shrub, with branches drooping to the ground (see photo in CRC Weed Management, 2003), it may provide some shelter.	MH	M
16. Injurious to fauna?	Toxic and “not usually eaten...Palatable for the dromedary...Dromedaries and goats are the most often affected” (Bahri et al, 1999). It is possible that indigenous fauna, which may be poisoned by it, might eat this plant.	H	H
Pest Animal			
17. Food source to pests?	Toxic and “not usually eaten...Palatable for the dromedary...Dromedaries and goats are the most often affected” (Bahri et al, 1999). May be eaten by feral goats, but as it is toxic (Bahri et al, 1999) it would provide minimal food.	L	H
18. Provides harbor?	As a large shrub, with branches drooping to the ground (see photo in CRC Weed Management, 2003), it may harbour foxes or rabbits as overnight cover.	MH	M
Agriculture			
19. Impact yield?	“It has the potential to become a significant threat to Australia’s pastoral industry.” As an “aggressive invader” that “may infest grazing land and prevent access to stock” (CRC Weed Management, 2003), and being an unpalatable shrub (El-bana et al, 2003), it could reduce the carrying capacity of the land by more than 5%. “All domestic species are susceptible” to intoxication which can kill (Bahri et al, 1999).	MH	MH

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QUESTION	COMMENTS	RATING	CONFIDENCE
20. Impact quality?	“Its toxins can taint milk, giving it an acrid taste and nasty smell and may poison nursing animals” (El Bahri et al, 1999). This could cause milk products to be rejected for sale.	H	H
21. Affect land value?	Land value is likely to be affected where severe infestations make grazing not viable (see Q. 19).	MH	MH
22. Change land use?	Control is expensive, since any treatments will need to continue for years until the seedbank is depleted (CRC Weed Management, 2003). Since the shrub is unpalatable (El-bana et al, 2003) and toxic (Bahri et al, 1999), land use may have to change from grazing to cropping.	MH	MH
23. Increase harvest costs?	“May infest grazing land and prevent access to stock” and control is expensive, since any treatments will need to continue for years until the seedbank is depleted (CRC Weed Management, 2003). Managing stock on infested lands and the control of infestations could both cause a major increase in harvest costs.	H	M
24. Disease host/vector?	No reference of this plant as a disease host/vector in CRC Weed Management (2003).	L	M

References cited:

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Revisions

Date Revised by Revision