

# Weeds

## PURPOSE:

Learn how to identify the weeds around your home, school and within your catchment area.

## WHAT IS A WEED?

A weed is a plant that grows where it is not wanted. Weeds are generally not native to the area and often reduce the number and variety of native plants (**biodiversity**). Many native species are 'pushed out' by weeds.

## WHERE DO WEEDS COME FROM?

Many plants that grow in our gardens at home are 'exotic' plants. That is, they have been introduced from another country. Most of these plants are well suited to Australia's climate and survive very well. They produce lots of seeds that are carried by birds, bats, wind or water to new areas where they establish as weeds and grow out of control. Weeds also enter our bushland areas by being dumped as garden cuttings. Once these weeds establish in the bush they are very hard to remove. We need to prevent these plants growing outside of our backyards.

## WHAT IS A RIPARIAN ENVIRONMENTAL WEED?

These are weeds that have made their way into the riparian zone, next to creeks and rivers, and have become so successful that they have out competed native plant species and changed the environment. Riparian **Environmental Weeds** can affect water flow in the creek and increase the effects of flooding. They also affect wildlife by destroying natural habitats and food supply.

## IDENTIFYING WEEDS

There are a number of good reference books, brochures and websites that help us to identify weeds. Some common weeds found in riparian areas in Ipswich have been provided on page 5. Use these references to help with the next activity and understand the terms 'exotic' and 'native'.

**REMINDER!!!** Did you find your **key words** for this activity?

PAGE 1

# Weeds

## ACTIVITY

### Creating your own weed identification cards

It is important to be able to identify the weeds growing in your local area before you develop a plan for removing them.

#### Materials:

- good cutting clippers or scissors
- plant press (or heavy books)
- newspaper or sheets of paper
- contact

- Step 1 -** Tour your school grounds or monitoring site and have a good look at the plants that are growing there. You may like to ask someone who knows about weeds to join you.
- Step 2 -** When you identify a plant as a weed, take a cutting of the leaves and flower (if available).
- Step 3 -** When you get back to the classroom place your cuttings in a plant press (two heavy telephone books will also work).
- Step 4 -** Using your reference material, fill in the Weed Identification Card, describing the weed so that it can be easily recognised in the future.
- Step 5 -** When the cutting is dry (7 – 10 days later), glue it to the correct identification card and cover it with contact to protect it from damage.
- Step 6 -** On the back of the card note down any changes to the plant that you notice at your next visit. If any action is taken to remove or reduce the spread of the weed, this can also be noted. It is good to keep a record as all changes have an impact on your site.

# Weeds

## WEED IDENTIFICATION CARD

Card Number:

NAME OF THE WEED: \_\_\_\_\_

Growth Form:  Herb  Grass  Vine  
 Shrub  Tree

Leaf Colour: \_\_\_\_\_

Flower Shape and Colour: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Flowering: \_\_\_\_\_

Smell: \_\_\_\_\_

Percentage Coverage: \_\_\_\_\_  
(how much of the area does this particular plant take up)

Insert plant specimen here

# Weeds

## SOME COMMON RIPARIAN ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDS FOUND IN IPSWICH ARE:

Chinese Elm  
*Celtis sinensi*



Camphor Laurel  
*Cinnamomum camphora*



Asparagus Fern  
*Protasparagus densiflorus*



Broadleaved Pepper Tree  
*Schinus terebinthifolia*



Umbrella Tree  
*Schefflera actinophylla*



Blue Morning Glory  
*Ipomoea indica*



Lantana  
*Lantana camara*



Mother of Millions  
*Bryophyllum spp.*



Cat's Claw Creeper  
*Macfadyena unguis-cati*



## CONTROLLING RIPARIAN ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDS

Removal and control of riparian environmental weeds requires careful planning. There are many ways in which weeds can be controlled such as: spraying, hand weeding, slashing, mulching, fire or a combination of these.

Once a weed is removed it should be replaced by a native species. Mulching and continual maintenance are needed to prevent the weed returning in the future.

The following web resources may help in identifying weeds:

Weed Australia - [www.weeds.org.au](http://www.weeds.org.au)

DPI&F CRC Weed Management - [www.weedsrc.org.au](http://www.weedsrc.org.au)

Brisbane City Council Weed Identification Tool - [www.brisbane.qld.gov.au](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au)