

Effectively managing weeds

The Department of Conservation's Weed Management System

The cost of controlling all weeds everywhere will always exceed available resources. The New Zealand Department of Conservation (DOC) has a strategic weed plan to make the best use of resources. This plan:

- Uses standard operating procedures underpinned by science
- Involves co-operation with other agencies and the community
- Applies continuous improvement in weed practices



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Reviewing, reporting and planning

Information from scientific research, monitoring and weed operations is stored and shared through the DOC weeds database, publications and the reporting and reviewing templates. It can then be fed into the planning process and applied to future work in a cycle of continuous improvement. All weed staff are given regular updates on improvements, and new staff are given training in the DOC weed management system.

Reviewing and storing information

- Database
- Publications
- Templates

Planning



Weed management

- Surveillance
- Weed-led programmes
- Site-led programmes

Scientific studies and monitoring

Monitoring weed control

For priority programmes, weed populations are monitored before and after control. This means we can accurately assess the effectiveness of control—how good a job did we really do?



This graph displays the mean number of adult gorse plants per plot at Asbestos Creek, Takaka Valley 2000–2004.

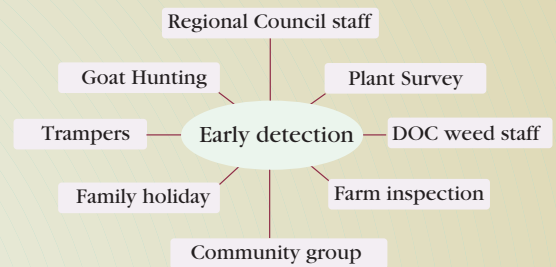


DOC supports scientific studies of weed ecology and control.

In this picture, Kate McAlpine tags gorse plants as part of an ecological study.

Weed surveillance

Weed surveillance means early detection and prompt control of new weeds. We actively look for new weeds in vulnerable spots and valuable sites. We also act upon casual reports of new weeds.



Weed-led...

Weed-led control focuses on a particular weed, and aims to eradicate it before it becomes well established. This means it must be controlled on all land in the conservancy, regardless of tenure or natural quality.

Canterbury DOC and council weeds staff are attempting to eradicate purple loosestrife from the Conservancy before control costs escalate too far.



...and site-led control



Site-led weed control focuses on protecting biodiversity at particular sites. Usually a suite of weeds are controlled. The higher the biodiversity at a site, the greater the priority for weed control.

In order to protect native species in Tongariro National Park, a range of weeds are controlled, including broom, contorta pine and heather.

Weed awareness



Photo: Environment Southland

Spread the word not the weed

DOC works with other agencies, and involves the community.

Here students from Grasmere School proudly display the Chilean flame creeper that they removed from Thomson's Bush Reserve as part of an ongoing control programme.



In summary...

DOC's weed management system:

- Has standard operating procedures for staff to follow
- Provides science to support operational weed work
- Allows for innovation and improvement
- Demonstrates wise use of funds
- Involves other agencies and the community