



**Bathurst Burr**  
*Xanthium spinosum* CRASSULACEAE  
 Origin: South America

**Description:**  
 An erect, spiny, annual herb to 1m, but usually 30-60cm.  
**Flowers:** Creamy green and small, developing into straw coloured burrs.  
**Leaves:** To 7cm long, dark green on upper surface, paler green on under surface, usually three-lobed with cream mid-vein.  
**Fruit:** Burrs are 1-1.5cm long, contain two seeds, and are covered in numerous yellow hooked spines.

**Notes:**

- Seeds disperse readily as burrs hook on animals, clothing, vehicles, etc. Burrs also float and can spread along watercourses.
- Invades waterways, grasslands, open woodlands, floodplains and roadsides, displacing native vegetation.

**Status:** Declared Noxious Weed

**Weedy facts:** Bathurst Burr seeds can germinate out of season.

**Weed treatment:**



**False Caper**  
*Euphorbia terracina* EUPHORBIACEAE  
 Origin: Mediterranean

**Description:**  
 An erect, perennial herb usually to 20-80cm. Much-branched woody stems, reddish at base.  
**Flowers:** Small, yellowish-green cup-like structure.  
**Leaves:** Linear, lance-shaped, 1-4cm long, with finely serrated margins. Alternately arranged and bright green along stems. More oval on flowering branches.

**Notes:**

- Prolific seeder that forms dense thickets which out-compete native vegetation. Able to invade healthy bushland, coastal, and riparian areas, in addition to disturbed areas such as roadsides.
- The stems are full of milky sap which can cause skin and eye irritation.
- Plants that emerge early produce the most seed, and can become increasingly tolerant to herbicide if not treated when small. Soil disturbance can trigger germination of the soil seed bank, so follow-up control is essential.

**Status:** Environmental weed in Colac Otway Shire

**Weedy facts:** False Caper is poisonous to humans.

**Weed treatment:**



**Galenia**  
*Galenia terrestris* AIZOACEAE  
 Origin: South Africa

**Description:**  
 A perennial greyish mat-forming plant, up to 300mm high and spreading 1.6m or more across, with thick, woody stems.  
**Flowers:** Small white or pink inconspicuous fragrant flowers appear from spring to summer. They are hairy on the outside.  
**Leaves:** Semi-succulent, oval to spoon-shaped, hairy and flat with a slightly re-curved tip.  
**Fruit:** Pentagonal cup-shaped capsules contain shiny black seeds to 1mm in length.

**Notes:**

- Galenia or Blanket Leaf is often found on disturbed sites, wasteland and roadsides.
- Forms dense mats of foliage and stems displacing native grasses and other understorey species.
- Disrupts light and prevents moisture getting to other species, and forms a monoculture.

**Similar native species:** Nodding Saltbush *Einadia nutans*.

**Status:** Environmental weed in Colac Otway Shire

**Weedy facts:** Said to threaten the honey industry as bees utilise it but the honey becomes tainted.

**Weed treatment:**



**Heliotrope**  
*Heliotropium europaeum* BORAGINACEAE  
 Origin: Europe

**Description:**  
 A low-growing but mostly erect, annual herb to 30cm. Covered in coarse hairs, greyish-green.  
**Flowers:** White, tubular, with yellow throats, 2-2.5cm long. Arranged in two rows along the upper edge of a curved flower spike.  
**Leaves:** Oval, greyish-green, to 7cm long. Hairy with well-defined veins.  
**Fruit:** Brownish, splits into four wrinkled segments or 'nutlets', each containing one seed.

**Notes:**

- Spreads from disturbed areas and pasture into native roadside vegetation.
- Leaves smell offensive when crushed.
- Has a slender much-branched taproot which can grow 1m in length.
- Rough surface of nutlets and hairs on flower spike help to disperse the seed on animals. Floodwaters can also spread seed.

**Status:** Environmental weed in Colac Otway Shire

**Weedy facts:** Several generations of Common Heliotrope can occur within one season.

**Weed treatment:**



**Hemlock**  
*Conium maculatum* APIACEAE  
 Origin: Europe, Asia and northern Africa

**Description:**  
 An erect biennial plant to 3m, but often less than 2m.  
**Flowers:** White to greenish-white, 2-4mm diameter, 5 petals, occurring in dense umbrella-like clusters at the ends of stems.  
**Leaves:** Fern or carrot-like, 12-15cm long but up to 50cm. Hairless, alternate, emitting a strong acrid odour when crushed. Stems are hollow with purple blotches and fine longitudinal grooves.  
**Fruit:** Small, greyish-brown capsule. Green when immature.

**Notes:**

- Prefers damp areas; invades native habitat including waterways, wetlands, marshes, floodplains, gullies, forest margins and roadsides.
- Spread by water, wind, machinery, vehicles and dumped garden waste.

**Status:** Declared Noxious Weed

**Weedy facts:** Hemlock is highly toxic to humans and livestock.

**Weed treatment:**



**Hoary Cress (White weed)**  
*Lepidium draba* L. BRASSICACEAE  
 Origin: Eastern Mediterranean to central and southern Asia

**Description:**  
 An erect, perennial herb to 75cm. Stems are covered with fine downy hairs, are longitudinally ribbed, and branch near the top.  
**Flowers:** White, 4-6mm in diameter with four petals, arranged in terminal clusters, and fragrant.  
**Leaves:** Ovate on the rosette and lower stems, obovate on the upper stems. Usually covered with fine white hairs. Margins can be smooth or alternately toothed.

**Notes:**

- A serious agricultural weed which forms monocultures and spreads to roadsides and other degraded areas. Competes with native understorey vegetation.
- Prefers open, dry, unshaded areas.
- Spreads readily by the movement of small fragments of root, and seeds.
- Highly tolerant of fire, drought, waterlogging and freezing conditions.

**Status:** Declared Noxious Weed

**Weedy Facts:** A single Hoary Cress plant can produce 1000 to 1500 seeds, with an 80% survival rate.

**Weed treatment:**



**Montbretia**  
*Crocsmia x crocosmiliflora* IRIDACEAE  
 Origin: South Africa

**Description:**  
 A corm-bearing perennial herb with annual leaves and flowers.  
**Flowers:** Up to 20 yellow to orange trumpet-shaped flowers per stem with zigzag flower stalks to 900mm high.  
**Leaves:** Soft, strap-like and mostly at the base with 6-12 leaves per plant, 300-800mm long and 10-20mm wide.  
**Fruit:** A usually shrivelled brown capsule containing round, brown seeds.

**Notes:**

- Forms widespread and dense clumps to the exclusion of indigenous plants.
- Spread as corms and rhizomes are moved to new areas by water or machinery.
- Many populations have originated from garden rubbish dumping.

**Status:** Environmental weed in Colac Otway Shire

**Weed treatment:**



**Paterson's Curse**  
*Echium plantagineum* BORAGINACEAE  
 Origin: Europe

**Description:**  
 An erect, many-branched, hairy annual herb usually to 1.2m high.  
**Flowers:** Purple to bluish trumpet-shaped to 30mm long, with two of its five stamens much longer than the others. Flowers are crowded along one side of a curved flower spike.  
**Leaves:** Initially has rosette leaves to 300mm long, hairy and broadly oval. Stem leaves are smaller and also hairy.  
**Fruit:** Capsule is in segments of four, black to greyish-brown and wrinkled.

**Notes:**

- A major agricultural weed, also occurring in various natural habitats including grasslands, woodlands, heathlands and along roadsides.
- Poisonous to grazing animals and horses in particular.
- Can form very extensive, persistent populations in disturbed areas. A single plant produces over 10,000 seeds.
- Seed is dispersed by animals, water, machinery, contaminated agricultural produce and by movement of soil.

**Similar native species:** Austral Bugle *Ajuga australis*.

**Status:** Declared Noxious Weed

**Weedy Facts:** Also known as 'Salvation Jane' in South Australia. It is considered a resource for bee-keepers.

**Weed treatment:**



**St John's Wort**  
*Hypericum perforatum* CLUSIACEAE  
 Origin: Europe

**Description:**  
 A perennial herb to 80cm, with two-ridged stems. Forms tangled thickets.  
**Flowers:** Golden-yellow with black dots (glands) on edges of petals, 2cm diameter, occurring in numerous terminal clusters.  
**Leaves:** Oval to linear, hairless, upper margin curled, paler underside, black dotted, with translucent oil glands. Occurring in opposite pairs 5-30mm long and 1.5-5mm wide.  
**Fruit:** Sticky, narrowly ovoid, reddish-brown capsule to 8mm long.

**Notes:**

- Potential to out-compete natives and restrict overstorey recruitment.
- Spreads by seed, rhizomes, and movement of cut sections of rhizomes.

**Similar native species:** Two native Hypericum species. Distinguished by stems with four ridges, smaller leaves, and no black dots on flowers.

**Status:** Declared Noxious Weed

**Weedy Facts:** One St John's Wort plant can produce thousands of seeds, which can remain dormant in the soil for 20 years.

**Weed treatment:**



**Fennel**  
*Foeniculum vulgare* APIACEAE  
 Origin: Europe

**Description:**  
 An erect, robust and many-stemmed perennial herb growing 2-3m high and forming large clumps of vegetation.  
**Flowers:** Numerous, tiny yellow-green flowers appear in flat-topped umbrella-like clusters in late spring and early summer.  
**Leaves:** To about 500mm long, light to mid-green. Finely divided into many feathery, thread-like segments.  
**Fruit:** Almost hairless cylindrical pods bearing 9-15 seeds.

**Notes:**

- Often seen along roadsides, railway tracks, waterways and drains but also invading bushland, pasture and disturbed sites.
- Smells strongly of aniseed when the foliage is handled.
- Infestations eliminate most other ground-flora and severely impede overstorey regeneration.

**Status:** Declared Noxious Weed.

**Weed treatment:**







**Horehound**  
*Marrubium vulgare* LAMIACEAE  
Origin: Europe

**Description:**  
Bushy aromatic perennial herb to about 600mm tall with over 100 individual stems.  
**Flowers:** White, two-lipped flowers are borne in dense whorl-like clusters on the stems at the leaf-nodes. Flowers usually from summer through to autumn.  
**Leaves:** Paired along the stems at the base of the flower clusters. They are very hairy and deeply wrinkled on the upper surface.  
**Fruit:** Calyx develops into a burr with hooked, curved spines and contains 4 brown or black seeds.

**Notes:**  
• Horehound is a widespread and troublesome weed, especially in degraded and disturbed areas.  
• Particularly invasive in pastures and roadsides, and is also invading bushland.  
• Burrs and seeds are spread by adhering to animals and humans, water and vehicle tyres.

**Status:** Environmental weed in Colac Otway Shire.



**Flax-leaf Fleabane**  
*Conyza bonariensis* ASTERACEAE  
Origin: South Africa

**Description:**  
Erect, annual herb to 1m tall with grey, stiff, bristle-like hairs. Stems densely hairy and unbranched below the flower-heads.  
**Flowers:** Flower-heads in a pyramidal panicle, 5-6mm long and 8-12mm in diameter. Each head made up of many individual linear flowers. Flowers late spring to autumn.  
**Leaves:** Leaves oblong or narrow-oblong, 4-9cm long and 5-15mm wide with toothed margins.  
**Fruit:** Oblong, pale, softly hairy achene with a white to pale pink pappus.

**Notes:**  
• Grows on roadsides and in waste areas and disturbed ground.  
• It can also be found bordering swamps and lakes.

**Status:** Declared Noxious Weed



**Hedge Mustard**  
*Sisymbrium officinale* BRASSICACEAE  
Origin: Europe, northern Africa, Asia

**Description:**  
A coarsely hairy annual or biennial herb to 90cm high.  
**Flowers:** Flowers are 4-8mm wide, yellow to pale yellow, clustered in inflorescences that elongate in fruit. Flowers usually in spring.  
**Leaves:** Leaves up to 25cm long, deeply-lobed, with toothed margins, growing in a basal rosette.  
**Fruit:** Erect narrowly conical fruit 1-2cm long, which grows on stout stalks pressed against stem.

**Status:** Environmental Weed in Colac Otway Shire.

**Weed treatment:**



**Prickly Lettuce**  
*Lactuca serriola* ASTERACEAE  
Origin: Europe, Western Asia

**Description:**  
Annual or biennial herb to 2m high with stiffly erect stems.  
**Flowers:** Pale yellow flowers slightly exceeding the flower-cup which is 6-9mm long and up to 15mm long when in fruit. Flowers usually from spring to summer.  
**Leaves:** Bluish-green leaves with spiny margin and midrib. Basal and lower stem leaves without stalks, oblong to oblanceolate in shape, 3-8cm long and 2-6cm wide, undivided and deeply lobed.  
**Fruit:** Fruit is a cypsela or achene (dry, indehiscent and one-seeded) with a pappus to assist in wind-dispersal.

**Notes:**  
• Widespread on drier areas, but also found on the margins of swamps and lakes.  
• Occurs on roadsides, in gardens and crops.

**Status:** Environmental Weed in Colac Otway Shire

**Weed treatment:**



**Twiggly Mullein**  
*Verbascum virgatum* SCROPHULARIACEAE  
Origin: Europe

**Description:**  
A biennial erect herb to 1m high. Flower stem grows from a rosette.  
**Flowers:** Flowers are yellow with a purple centre, in inflorescences 30-60cm long. Flowers usually spring to autumn.  
**Leaves:** Oblong, regularly-toothed leaves 8-30cm long.  
**Fruit:** Fruit globular, 9mm in diameter. Seeds brown and cylindrical, 1mm long.

**Notes:**  
• Occurs in disturbed sites, along roadsides and near habitation.

**Status:** Environmental Weed in Colac Otway Shire



This brochure identifies the recommended treatment methods for each specific weed as indicated by the icons below. Note that you should always seek professional advice in relation to using chemicals

- Hand Removal/Pulling**  
Remove the weed via hand or mechanical means
- Cut Trunk and Stems**  
Saw or lop trunk and branches of weed
- Grubbing**  
Use a mattock to remove the weed and its roots
- Mulch/Smother**  
Place newspaper/cardboard over weeds and then mulch
- Ringbark**  
Chip a 2-5cm wide ring around the trunk of the weed
- Slashing**  
Mowing or slashing weeds prior to flowering/seeding using a whipper snipper, lawnmower or tractor.
- Foliar Spray**  
Apply herbicide to the leaves and stems of the weed
- Cut and Paint**  
Cut weed close to ground and immediately paint herbicide on cut surface (within 10-30 seconds)
- Scrape and Paint**  
Scrape bark of weed close to ground and paint with systemic herbicide
- Frilling**  
Use an axe to cut "frills" in trunk of weed and apply herbicide immediately to the frill
- Solarisation**  
Plastic bags or sheets are used to trap heat generated by the sun to kill weeds.

For more information on local weeds and appropriate control methods, please visit [www.colacotway.vic.gov.au](http://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au).



**African Boxthorn**  
*Lycium ferocissimum* SOLANACEAE  
Origin: South Africa

**Description:**  
Woody shrub to 3m forming dense stands. The ribbed stems are green and softly haired when young becoming greyish-brown and woody with age.  
**Flowers:** Yellow pea flowers in tight clusters at the end of the branches in late winter to spring.  
**Leaves:** The leaves are formed in 3 narrow leaflets that are dark green above, and silvery grey-green and hairy below. Margins are rolled under.  
**Fruit:** Bears seeds in downy pods. Seeds mature in late spring-early summer and the pods become grey-black.

**Notes:**  
• Highly invasive, can become dominant in disturbed or degraded areas.  
• Prolific seeder forming large seed banks remaining in the ground for at least 10 years.  
• Seed is dispersed by wind and animals.

**Similar native species:** Common Wedge-pea *Gompholobium huegelii*

**Status:** Weed of National Significance, Declared Noxious Weed.

**Weedy facts:** Reproduces by seed with pods exploding to disperse up to 3m from the parent plant.



**Sweet Briar (Briar Rose)**  
*Rosa rubiginosa* ROSACEAE  
Origin: Europe

**Description:**  
A spiny perennial shrub to 3m high arising from shallow rootstock. Has multiple stems with backward facing spines along their length.  
**Flowers:** Vary from white to pink with five petals. Flowers measure to 40mm. Appear in late spring to summer.  
**Leaves:** Consist of pairs of shortly-stalked, oval leaflets along the leaf stalk with a single terminal leaflet. The leaflets contain glandular hairs on the underside and finely-serrated margins that secrete an apple-like fragrance.  
**Fruit:** Smooth reddish-orange elliptical capsules or hips in which the seed is contained mature in late summer and are shed in autumn. Seeds are numerous.

**Notes:**  
• Sweet Briar has the potential to invade native bushland.  
• Dense infestations provide food and harbour for pest animals, such as rabbits and foxes.  
• Seeds are spread by fruit-eating animals and birds, and also by water. Regenerates by re-suckering from roots.

**Status:** Declared Noxious Weed.

**Weed treatment:**



**Gorse**  
*Ulex europaeus* FABACEAE  
Origin: Europe

**Description:**  
A large shrub to 3m, easily recognised by its flowers and its many-branched stems armed with numerous spines to 50mm long.  
**Flowers:** Bright yellow, fragrant pea flowers appear in clusters in winter and early spring.  
**Leaves:** True leaves on seedlings have 3 leaflets, replaced by scales on mature plants.  
**Fruit:** Flowers are followed by dark brown, oblong, hairy seed pods, 10-20mm long. Pods explode to release seeds.

**Notes:**  
• Gorse forms dense thickets that harbour vermin and exclude growth of indigenous plants.  
• Seeding is prolific and the seeds have a hard, water-resistant coating.  
• Seeds remain dormant in the soil for up to 30 years.  
• Seeds are dispersed by birds, animals, ants, water, vehicles, machinery, gravel, dumped garden waste and contaminated soil.

**Similar native species:** Prickly Acacia *Acacia paradoxa*.

**Status:** Weed of National Significance, Declared Noxious Weed.

**Weedy facts:** Gorse is regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia because of its potential for spread, and economic and environmental impacts. It is a major agricultural weed in Tasmania and parts of Victoria and is becoming an environmental threat in national parks and other bushland areas.

**Weed treatment:**



**Chilean Needle-grass**  
*Nassella neesiana* POACEAE  
Origin: South America

**Description:**  
A tussock-forming perennial grass, up to 1.2m high.  
**Flower/Seed head:** Loose, open, drooping panicle at the end of the flowering stems. The bracts holding the flowers are purple, giving the whole plant a distinctive purplish colour. Flowers and sets seed during spring and early summer. Seeds: pale brown and sharply pointed. Between the seed and its tail (awn) there is a characteristic raised ring (corona) 1-1.5mm long with small teeth encircling the awn. Cleistogenes (hidden seeds) are also produced at the stem nodes (elbows) and base of the plant beneath the leaf sheath.  
**Leaves:** Narrow, coarse leaves 5mm wide and 300mm long, with distinct ribs running from base to tip and slightly serrated edges.

**Notes:**  
• As a vigorous competitor, it is a major threat to both conservation and agricultural lands.  
• Capable of producing up to 22,000 seeds per square metre with a long-lived seed bank.  
• The "needle-sharp" seeds can cause physical harm to both animals and humans.  
• The stem seeds enable the plant to reproduce even if flowering is prevented by slashing or grazing.

**Similar native species:** Similar to several native Australian Spear grasses *Austrostipa* spp. The seeds of native *Austrostipa* spp. appear similar except that they don't have the corona. Identify when flowering to avoid misidentification

**Status:** Weed of National Significance, Declared Noxious Weed.

**Weedy facts:** Trials have shown that Chilean Needle-grass can out-compete Serrated Tussock.

**Weed treatment:**



**Serrated Tussock**  
*Nassella trichotoma* POACEAE  
Origin: South America

**Description:**  
A fine-leaved perennial tussock-forming grass to about 600mm high.  
**Flower/Seed head:** The multi-branched seed head is up to 350mm long and at each junction there are two or three branches with a single seed on each branch. It has a weeping appearance when in full flower and changes in colour as it matures from purple through to gold. Spring flowering. Seed: Hard and small with a ring of white hairs at one end and a twisted tail (awn) 25mm long at the other end. The awn is attached off-centre to the seed.  
**Leaves:** Blades are thin, up to 500mm in length, and tightly-rolled with small serrations which can be felt when running the leaf between the fingers from the tip to the base.

**Notes:**  
• A major agricultural weed in the region that has also invaded native grasslands, pastures, grassy woodlands, roadsides and riparian areas.  
• Large, vigorous plants can produce 100,000 seeds annually. Seed remains viable in the soil for 10-15 years.  
• Seeds are easily spread by wind, machinery and vehicles, and by slashing, and also by adhering to animals, clothing and footwear.  
• Ripe seed heads break off and disperse on winds for several kilometres.

**Similar native species:** Can be mistaken for native Tussock Grasses *Poa* spp., and Wallaby Grasses *Austrodanthonia* spp.

**Status:** Weed of National Significance, Declared Noxious Weed.

**Weed treatment:**



**Emergent Weeds**  
Emergent weeds are those that have only recently spread to an area. They are often present in such small numbers that eradication is still possible. They should be eliminated as a priority.

**Weeds and Fire**  
Weeds, particularly those with woody stems and branches, can significantly increase bushfire risk by adding to fuel loads and contributing to a fire's intensity. Some possess certain characteristics (e.g. leaf oils, fine foliage, dense growth) that add to their flammability while others, particularly vines and creepers, can also act as 'ladder fuels', carrying fire from the ground up into the canopy or on to a structure.

Most weeds produce huge numbers of seeds throughout their lifetimes, many of which have growth cycles that are stimulated by fire. This can result in a massive weed response in the aftermath of a bushfire.

Weeds that increase fuel loads or contribute to a fire's intensity are identified in this brochure by a fire icon.

**Local Advice**  
Landcare Networks have expertise in weed identification and management, and are available to provide advice and sometimes source financial assistance for their members. For information on your local Landcare Network, visit the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority website: <http://www.ccma.vic.gov.au/What-we-do/Community/Landcare.aspx>

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