



Weeds in your school yard

Weeds can have serious impacts on a school's biodiversity. It is important to be able to identify and remove them, generally by simply digging or pulling the weeds out.

Weeds can be sneaky to identify. They can look like plants that are not weeds, including native or endangered species. They can look very different in their juvenile and mature stages.

A weed is a plant that is simply in the wrong place. They are often invasive, can quickly spread and can have negative economical, environmental and social impacts. Weeds may be introduced to Australia or are Australian and growing outside their natural range. Around 28,000 plant species have been introduced into Australia since European settlement. There are over 1166 species of introduced plants in Queensland and Townsville has over 235 introduced plants that is increasing at an average rate of nine new plants per year. Weeds costs Queensland over \$600 million per year.

Weeds can invade and replace native vegetation, alter species composition and abundance, alter fire regimes and choke waterways. Weeds can affect animals by reducing natural habitat and food. They can also be toxic plants.

Weeds are spread by humans (deliberate or accidental) or by animals, wind or water. They can be controlled by many different methods including mechanical, chemical, manual, mulching, hydrology, fire and by planting local native species (biological).

How to identify weeds:

- Consult an expert such as staff from NQ Dry Tropics or Greening Australia
- Field guides



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- Botanical keys
- Herbarium specimens

If a plant cannot be identified using online tools or weed identification publications, correct identification can be gained by sending a sample to the [Queensland Herbarium](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildlife-ecosystems/plants/queensland_herbarium/). The website also provides information on collecting and preparing plant specimens for identification.

http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildlife-ecosystems/plants/queensland_herbarium/



Six steps to beating weeds:

1. Identify where the weeds are:
 - Not present
 - Scattered
 - Dense
2. Work from weed free areas into the scattered areas and then the dense areas.
3. Try to control weeds before they mature and set seeds.
4. Reduce germination by not causing extensive soil disturbance (such as using machinery). Avoid using non-selective herbicides.
5. Encourage competition from native species.
6. Prevent weeds from entering your school grounds on vehicles or machinery.

Where to find more information:

- Biosecurity Queensland: http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4790_13149.htm
- Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries: http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4790_8331.htm
- Greening Australia: <http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/>
- James Cook University: fact sheets on North Queensland weeds <http://www-public.jcu.edu.au/discovernature/weedscommon/index.htm>
- The Australian Tropical Herbarium: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/cpbr/cd-keys/rfk/index.html>
- Weed Spotters Queensland Network: http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildlife-ecosystems/plants/queensland_herbarium/weed_spotters_queensland_net_work.html



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