
Landcare Week 2024: Landcare is for Everyone - combating invasive weeds in Australia

Canberra, 07 August 2024: This Landcare Week, CropLife Australia highlights the critical role that everyone, from home gardeners to professional environmental land managers, plays in protecting our unique native habitats from the threat of invasive weeds. This year's theme, "Landcare is for Everyone," highlights the responsibility we share in safeguarding Australia's natural landscapes.

"Australians are increasingly looking for ways to reduce their environmental impact, however, many may not realise that one of the best ways they can contribute is by remaining vigilant in their own backyards," said Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr. Matthew Cossey.

"More than 3,200 invasive weeds are now endemic in Australia, with approximately 20 new species being introduced every year. Most of these were originally imported into Australia as decorative garden plants.

"For all the home gardeners out there, improving biodiversity can be a great way to create habitats for pollinators. However, this doesn't mean letting weeds go uncontrolled is the right approach. In fact, escaped garden weeds are among the top three threats to the natural resources and biodiversity of Australia, costing the agriculture industry alone an estimated \$4.3 billion annually.


Weeds in the garden are one thing but left to thrive in the wild or on farm, they can have catastrophic consequences. Not only do they outcompete native plants and crops for water and nutrients, but they significantly increase fire risk, can be poisonous for animals and can act as hosts for pests and diseases," said Mr. Cossey.

Lantana, first introduced to Australia as an ornamental garden plant in 1841, is now considered one of Australia's most invasive weeds, covering more than five million hectares of subcoastal land across New South Wales to Far North Queensland. It creates dense thickets that smother native vegetation, create hotter bushfires and have negatively impacted more than 1400 native species including endangered and threatened species.

Thankfully, professional environmental land managers are at the forefront of the fight against invasive weeds like lantana and utilise a range of control methods, including the responsible use of herbicides like glyphosate. Glyphosate not only plays a crucial role in controlling invasive weeds in various parts of Australia, but it is the only herbicide known to manage and eradicate many of Australia's worst weeds.

About CropLife Australia

CropLife Australia is the national peak industry organisation representing the plant science sector in Australia. CropLife's members are the world-leading innovators, developers, manufacturers and formulators of crop protection and crop biotechnology products. The plant science industry, worth more than \$31.6 billion a year to Australian agricultural production, provides products to protect crops against pests, weeds and diseases, as well as developing crop biotechnologies key to the nation's agricultural productivity, profitability and sustainability. CropLife is a part of the plant science industry's 91 country international federation.



Mr. Cossey concluded, “Ultimately though the best thing we can do is prevent these kinds of incursions in the first place through informed plant purchasing and good management practices at home to support the work of environmental land managers.”

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