

Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*)



Boneseed was initially introduced to Australia as an ornamental garden plant. It is now established as a significant weed of native vegetation. It is a declared weed under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*.

Description

Boneseed is an erect perennial shrub that usually grows to 1.5 m high and lives for 10 to 20 years. Boneseed has a woody branched stem and oval-shaped leaves with irregularly serrated edges. New growth is typically covered by fine downy hairs. Seeds germinate at any time of year, but mostly autumn. Plants are usually older than 18 months before flowering starts. The flowers are yellow with a daisy form. Flowers have 5 to 8 petals and appear in late winter and spring.

The fruit ripen in early summer. Berries are round and fleshy and initially green, but turn black when mature. The fruit contain a single smooth round seed 6 to 7 mm in diameter that becomes bone coloured when dry. A single plant can produce 50,000 seeds a year of which about 60 percent are viable. Seeds can remain dormant in the soil more than 10 years.

Impacts

Boneseed impacts on native vegetation by invading the shrub layer of grassy woodlands and coastal vegetation. It displaces other shrubs and suppresses the growth of grasses and other ground-layer plants. It provides poor habitat for native fauna and reduces biodiversity.

Boneseed has a shallow root system that can absorb moisture from light summer showers before it reaches the deeper roots of other plants. This gives it a competitive advantage over deeper-rooted species, especially in areas of low summer rainfall. Boneseed can invade intact native vegetation. However, germination is more abundant following fire and other disturbances.

Distribution

Boneseed was introduced to Australia from South Africa as an ornamental garden plant. Boneseed grows in a wide range of conditions but prefers sandy or loamy soils in the cooler and wetter regions of the Mount Lofty Ranges. Boneseed is widespread in the grassy woodlands of national parks, forestry reserves and SA Water reserves. The berries are a food source for birds and mammals which spread seed over long distances.



Control methods

A range of effective control measures are available including hand pulling, herbicide treatment, physical removal and fire. Natural regeneration or oversowing with native plants is an important part of the rehabilitation process. Because of the large and persistent seedbanks in the soil, follow-up treatment is required for many years. For advice on chemical control techniques contact your nearest Landscape Board.

What to do

If you suspect that you have Boneseed on your property, please email photos to Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu for identification. This is a free service and they will also provide you with information on current control techniques.

Declarations

The following sections of the *Landscape SA Act* apply to boneseed in the Hills and Fleurieu region:

- 186(1) Prohibiting entry to area
- 186(2) Prohibiting movement on public roads
- 188(1) Cannot sell the plant
- 188(2) Cannot sell any produce / goods carrying the plant
- 192(2) Landowner must control the plant on their land
- 194 Recovery of control costs on adjoining road reserves

Further information

Further information is available through Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu

Mount Barker Office:

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