

# What makes a pest plant?

## Pest hub factsheet

### What's the difference between a weed and a pest plant?

For most people 'pest plants' and 'weeds' mean the same thing. When it comes to biosecurity, all pest plants are weeds but not all weeds are pest plants.

A weed is a plant in an environment humans think it shouldn't be in, and seen to be a nuisance. A pest plant is a weed that meets certain criteria for a plan of action to be put against it in the Regional Pest Management Plan (pest plan) and is considered a biosecurity, economic or environmental risk.

Keeping pests out and minimising the damage caused by established pests is essential to protect Otago's diverse and internationally-significant environment.

It supports Otago's ability to:

- ▶ Enable thriving biodiversity (the variety of life in a given habitat)
- ▶ Maintain health ecosystems
- ▶ Maximise natural resources for economic gain
- ▶ Protect social and cultural values of the environment

### How does a weed get into the pest plan?

The National Policy Direction for Pest Management 2015 (NPD) and the Biosecurity Act 1993 set out how regional councils should decide what is included in a pest plan. The process includes undertaking extensive public consultation and a cost-benefit analysis for each plant. This ensures we direct pest management to where it will have the most benefit for the best use of resources.

#### SOME OF THE COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDE:

- ▶ Will it impact environmental, economic and/or cultural values?
- ▶ How widespread is the plant?
- ▶ The significance of the damage it may cause
- ▶ What will happen if we don't manage it through our pest plan i.e. is it already well controlled by the community or another organisation?
- ▶ How much will it cost for us to manage the pest through our plan?

If the cost of making a plant a pest under our plan outweighs the benefits, then we cannot justify adding it to the plan.

### What's the pest plan?

The pest plan gives us a framework to manage pest plants and animals in Otago.

#### THE PEST PLAN INCLUDES:

- ▶ Goals for managing pests
- ▶ How we will achieve those goals
- ▶ How we will monitor pests
- ▶ Rules that everyone in Otago must follow for the management of pests in the plan

We have a responsibility as a regional council under the Biosecurity Act 1993 to review our pest plan every 10 years.



#### ORGANISM OF INTEREST

We must have enough information on a plant to be able to undertake the cost-benefit analysis. If we don't have enough information, we can set a goal to gather more information on a plant by making it an 'organism of interest' in our pest plan. This means that we will keep an eye on the plant and gather more information on it for consideration in our next pest plan.

# Pest Management

There are five activity areas for the management of pests; how widespread a pest plant problem is will determine which one will be used. Each activity area has a different goal and is only suitable for certain kinds of pests.

## 1 EXCLUSION AND SURVEILLANCE

The exclusion programme aims to prevent certain pests, which are currently not found in Otago, from establishing here. Applies to pest plants not yet established in Otago.



▶ **EXAMPLE**

African feather grass and Chilean needle grass

## 2 ERADICATION

The eradication programme aims to get rid of these pests from Otago. Pest plants in this category must still be at a manageable level.



▶ **EXAMPLE**

Spiny broom is our only eradication pest plant

## 3 PROGRESSIVE CONTAINMENT

The progressive containment programme aims to stop a pest from spreading and/or contain it to a certain area. Applies to pest plants that have built up numbers, but haven't spread to most of Otago yet.



▶ **EXAMPLE**

Bomarea and Old Man's Beard

## 4 SUSTAINED CONTROL

The sustained control programme aims to provide for ongoing control of the pest to reduce its impacts on environmental, economic and cultural values and spread to other properties. These pests are already widespread so we need to slowly reduce their numbers to achieve the best cost-benefit outcomes.



▶ **EXAMPLE**

Gorse and broom

## 5 SITE-LED

Site-led programmes have rules for specific pests that only apply in that area. Site-led areas have special biodiversity and other values to protect.



▶ **EXAMPLE**

Banana passionfruit and Darwin's barberry in parts of Dunedin