

The story so far on Wandering Trad

Tradescantia fluminensis (Wandering Trad) forms thick mats of leaves and stems along stream banks that suppress all other plants. In the Dandenongs an estimated 50km of streams are impacted. Several bio-control agents from Brazil (Trad's country of origin) were imported, tested and successfully released in New Zealand, where much of the preliminary work has already undertaken. Following community pressure a bio-control program was initiated in Australia during 2014.

The initial funding approved in mid 2014 enabled importation from NZ and testing of two biocontrol agents, an insect and a fungus, and the results have been very promising. The agents have been tested on Australian native plant species likely to be affected, under strict quarantine conditions. **Agriculture Victoria (DEJTR)** at the Agibio Centre at La Trobe University carried out work on the insect, and CSIRO the fungus.

An application to the Australian Weeds Committee to have Trad declared as a target for biological control was approved in January 2016. Extra funding of \$200K was approved in December 2015 to finalise the host specificity testing and to apply for release permits if it is safe to do so.



The insect, *Neolema ogloblini*, attacks the leaves of the plant as shown here. It has been released in New Zealand and is successfully attacking Trad in the wild. It spreads by natural increase.



The fungus, *Kordyana brasiliensis*, (Brazilian yellow leaf spot fungus) attacks the leaves. The spores are spread by wind, much more quickly than the insect.

Both agents will reduce the biomass of trad until a natural balance is achieved between Trad and control.

In addition to the control program, Federal funding was approved in mid 2014 to combat the spread and impact of Trad while the biological control agents are undergoing testing. This project has been run by Community Weed Alliance of the Dandenongs (CWAD). Efforts have been concentrated where Trad is likely to affect rare or endangered species or communities in the Dandenong Ranges, on private and public land.

Testing situation in August 2016

Testing of the fungus *Kordyana brasiliensis* has been successfully completed and an application to release it will be submitted by the end of 2016. Testing of the insect *Neolema ogloblini* is still continuing, but it is hoped that an application to release will also be made by the end of this year or early next year.

Releases!

In association with CSIRO and **Agriculture Victoria (DEJTR)**, we in CWAD are now making plans for the controlled release of the biocontrols. Individual release plots 10m x 6m, with ten plots in each EVC involved will be set up. The current species will be listed and estimates made of the Trad biomass.

CSIRO and Agriculture Victoria (DEJTR) would like other community environment groups to be involved (as were groups helped with the successful release of Bridal Creeper biocontrols). If your group knows of significant areas of dense Trad and are able to be involved, please contact us (**email below**).

The Trad program would appreciate your support! Mention the project when you are speaking to your Local, State and Federal representatives. They have responded to the need already; so acknowledge their support and ask for funding to complete the program and release the beasts.

This summary has been prepared by Bill Incoll (Friends of Sherbrooke Forest) and Glenn Brooks-McMillan (Community Weed Alliance of the Dandenongs). For more information, contact CWAD on mail.cwad@gmail.com