A NEW BIOCONTROL INTRODUCTION AGAINST
PARTHENIUM HYSTEROPOHORUS IN QUEENSLAND

Mariano Treviño, Fe Ambatali and Rachel McFadyen
Alan Fletcher Research Station,
Queensland Department of Natural Resources,
PO Box 36, Sherwood, Brisbane, Qld. 4075

The biological control agent *Conotrachelus albocinereus* has been introduced to Australia to supplement the effects of other agents already present on *Parthenium hysterophorus* in Queensland. Host specificity testing of this stem-galling Argentinian weevil *C. albocinereus* conducted at DNR’s Alan Fletcher Research Station, Sherwood in 1993 confirmed that the weevil is safe for introduction. Mass rearing began in 1994 with the first release made in 1995. So far over 15,000 weevils have been released in Central and North Queensland, and releases continue to be made. Adult feeding damage is insignificant. The damage is mainly by the larval feeding which results in the development of galls. Larval galls generally kill axillary shoots but not the main stem, though this may be weakened. Galls however frequently act as resource sinks, reducing flower and seed production by the plant. The agent is now established in some sites in Central Queensland, however is still too early for a measurable impact on the weed.