WEED MANAGEMENT IN PYRETHRUM

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Being a perennial crop which may remain in the ground for up to six years, particularly slow growing and sensitive to many herbicides, pyrethrum crops experience significant weed competition. The herbicide strategies currently used in pyrethrum production, provide adequate control of a number of important weeds, although there are a number of common weeds which escape these strategies.

Cleavers (*Galium aparine* L.) and white clover (*Trifolium repens* L.) are two major weeds which are proving difficult to control with current strategies, particularly in young crops. As part of a Horticultural Research and Development Corporation and Botanical Resources Australia funded project, Serve-Ag Research, in collaboration with Agronico has been investigating a number of new and novel control measures for these weeds over the past two seasons.

An initial review of all weed management research conducted in pyrethrum over the past ten years was completed in the early stages of the project, along with *Galium* seed germination studies, and pot trials to identify pre and post emergent products for control of these weeds. More recently a trial established to assess the suitability of a number of alternative weed management techniques such as mulching and cover crops has provided some promising results.

Drilling into a mulch of wheat residue has provided substantial weed control benefits, this technique will be further refined in the upcoming season. In addition a number of new herbicide products were trialed with a mix of clomazone and diflufenican, applied post drilling and pre crop emergence, providing promising results.