

New interactive keys to New Zealand weeds

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Summary New interactive keys are being developed for rapid and accurate identification and management of New Zealand weeds and pest plants. These powerful but simple to use plant identification tools are created using Lucid™ software.

The first key, completed in July 2009, is for the identification of all 150 National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) species banned from sale, propagation and distribution in New Zealand (Dawson *et al.* 2010). In addition to the NPPA species, a further 150 similar and related species are included. This key is comprehensively illustrated with >5000 images. The key links to an electronic version of the naturalised plants flora (Webb *et al.* 1988) and other New Zealand plant resources (MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (MAF-BNZ), Ngā Tipu o Aotearoa – New Zealand Plants, and the Weedbusters websites).

The NPPA key is currently being extended to include all 328 species on the Department of Conservation Consolidated List of Environmental Weeds in New Zealand (Howell 2008). This project is scheduled for completion in March 2011. The combined key covers more than 500 weed species and we hope to add further weeds in the future.

These new keys include some 50 characters and more than 200 character states and are freely available from the Landcare Research website. For consistency they share data with and are closely modelled on three keys to Australian weeds developed and distributed by the Centre for Biological Information Technology (CBIT) (Navie 2004, 2009, Navie and Adkins 2008).

In the course of this work, the correct names following the most up-to-date botanical treatments were resolved for many weed taxa. These updated names have been incorporated into the interactive keys, the Landcare Research Plant Names database, the new edition of An Illustrated Guide to Common Weeds of New Zealand (Popay *et al.* 2010), and the MAF-BNZ NPPA list. This provides an important consistency of usage of weed names in New Zealand.

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