

Bushcare weed control of Coolatai grass (*Hyparrhenia hirta*) in Cobbler Creek Recreation Park, Golden Grove SA, Australia

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Summary Coolatai grass (*Hyparrhenia hirta*) was first identified in Cobbler Creek Recreation Park, Golden Grove SA, in approximately 1994 and was thought to be an upcoming weed of significance and a priority weed for control (S. Taylor, Department of Natural Resources SA, personal communication, 2010). Since that date it has spread throughout the park and surrounding areas uncontrollably, outcompeting native plants and also forming dense thickets on grazing properties and in council reserves. Coolatai is a very invasive weed and tends to become dominant in open habitats such as woodlands and grasslands, particularly in areas with rainfall of 400–800 mm. The original range of Coolatai is extensive, including Mediterranean Europe, southern and northern Africa and also into west Asia (CRC Weed Management Guide 2007).

Coolatai can be controlled using a combination of both physical and chemical control methods depending on each individual site. Bushcare weed control techniques have been implemented within the park to try and control this weed because this approach best protects the sensitive native grasses and groundcovers that are growing in close proximity to the Coolatai patches. A combination of chipping and spraying is

used to control the Coolatai stages, allowing the native plants to reoccupy where the weeds were growing and compete with any new seedlings that germinate the following season.

Bushcare weed control principals have been applied on some large patches of Coolatai in the park for the last 3–4 years and have resulted in the complete control of all mature plants in these areas. Follow up chipping is still required to remove any newly germinated seedlings. It is a time-consuming but rewarding process, and is increasing the conservation value of the largest remnant of Mallee box (*Eucalyptus porosa*) grassy woodland left on the Adelaide Plains (Department for Environment and Heritage 2003).

REFERENCES

- CRC Weed Management Guide (2007). Coolatai grass (*Hyparrhenia hirta*). Weed management guide, 10 pp. Cooperative Research Centre for Australian Weed Management, Adelaide.
- Department for Environment and Heritage (2003). Cobbler Creek Recreation Park management plan. Department for Environment and Heritage, Adelaide, South Australia.