

Weeds sprouting into summer

Are there any plants in your garden that might be having a harmful impact on the dune or neighbouring forest environment? Common garden plants that have become weeds at Waikato beaches include succulents, flowering daisies and palms. Whilst they may be beautiful in a coastal setting and seem harmless, if they are left to their own devices they can spread quickly into neighbouring beaches and coastal cliffs. Weeds spread naturally but also with human activities – weeds at the beach often come from urban gardens in other parts of the country.

There are now more plant species from other countries growing wild in New Zealand than our own native plant species. Over 75 per cent of the weeds that impact on our native plant and animal species were originally introduced to New Zealand as garden plants. Around Auckland alone there are four garden species that establish in the wild every year, adding to the more than 300 seriously invasive weeds managed by the Department of Conservation.

In a beach environment, weeds can smother shrubs on the back dunes as well as grow over into the dunes, affecting native sand binders and changing growing conditions. Along coastal cliffs, weeds become very difficult and costly to control because they are hard to get to.

If you are gardening over summer at the bach, please remove or control weedy plants. Call 0800 BIOSEC (246 732), or check www.weedbusters.org.nz for the best method of disposal for the weeds you remove.



Common garden plants such as gazanias, arcticos and agapanthus can become weeds in a beach environment. Photo: J Dahm.

Weedbusters

Weedbusters focus on plants that affect our environment, economy and health.

If you need to identify a plant that you think might be a weed, visit www.weedbusters.org.nz and click on 'weed information'.

You can type in the weed and it will give you a description, any similar looking species, why it's weedy, how it spreads and how to get rid of it.



Beachcare battling weeds...

Many groups on the Coromandel have been battling bushy asparagus (*Asparagus densiflorus*). Originally from South Africa, bushy asparagus forms dense patches smothering shrubs and other low dune vegetation. It has long-lived tubers that re-sprout and the seeds are widely distributed by birds. At Rings, Kuaotunu and Tairua, beachcare groups and contractors have weed removal programmes in place trialing different methods. The areas are being planted with natives after the weeds are destroyed in an effort to keep weeds from re-establishing.



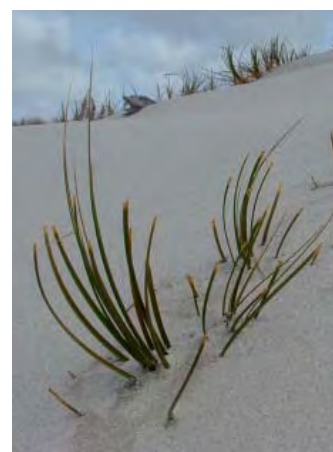
Many beachcare groups are tackling weed issues. The site above is a trial weed eradication area at Rings beach. Photo: J Dahm.

Pets and pests at the beach over summer

There are numerous community members on the Coromandel working hard with Environment Waikato, Department of Conservation and other agencies to look after important New Zealand species such as kiwi, the endangered New Zealand dotterel and remaining coastal forest areas. Birds such as the kiwi and dotterel are very vulnerable to dogs, cats and mustelids (stoats and ferrets).

If you take your pet with you to the beach this summer, please don't let it roam.

Iain Baggaley at EcoBalance is contracted to Environment Waikato to provide technical advice on animal pest issues on the Coromandel Peninsula. You can talk to Iain about setting up pest control programmes and getting rid of possums, rabbits or other critters on your property. Iain also has a range of equipment for sale or on a loan basis.



Pingao is very palatable to rabbits and plants can be easily destroyed by browsing.

On the west coast the team at EcoFx have a wealth of information and resources you can tap in to.

For all of your biosecurity enquiries, please phone 0800 BIOSEC (246 732).