

Pest of the month

Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*)

Boneseed is a fast growing evergreen shrub, growing up to 3 metres high, that can rapidly colonise coastal sites and displace native vegetation. It grows on low fertility soils and is well adapted to dry sites, forming a dense cover and shading out native seedlings.

The leaves are smooth and leathery with toothed edges, tapered leaf bases and a powdery lower leaf surface. It has clusters of small, yellow, daisy-like flowers in spring that produce large quantities of seeds. The fruit is initially green, becoming round and black when ripe and attracting birds, allowing it to spread rapidly. The seed is very hard and can remain viable in the soil for up to 10 years.

Boneseed was introduced to New Zealand as an ornamental plant from the Cape Province in South Africa and was first recorded as growing wild in 1870. It is now prohibited from propagation and sale throughout New Zealand because of its rapid spread and displacement of native vegetation.



Boneseed (Chrysanthemoides monilifera).

In the Tasman-Nelson region, it is widespread on the Port Hills of Nelson. Because of its widespread distribution, the number of property owners involved, and the difficult terrain of the Port Hills, the most cost-effective long-term means of control is through biological control. Boneseed leaf roller caterpillars were released in this area in October 2007. Occupiers in the Port Hills area are encouraged to destroy this plant.

Outside of this area, there are only a few known sites – these include Cable Bay, Kina, Jacketts Island, Collingwood and a new site found recently at Tapu Bay. A lot of work has been undertaken to kill the plants in these areas because of the risk of spread, the extensive areas of suitable habitat, and the potential for significant adverse effects. All known sites are inspected annually and occupiers are required to destroy plants.

In the Marlborough Sounds, the Marlborough District Council, in conjunction with the Department of Conservation, has an active eradication programme for this pest. Tasman residents with properties in the Sounds should ensure they don't inadvertently carry boneseed plants or seed on to their properties. For information on identification and control, contact Council's Biosecurity officers on 03 5438400. More detailed information can be found on the Weedbusters website under http://weedbusters.co.nz/weed_info/detail.asp?WeedID=84