



Government  
of South Australia

# WEED IDENTIFICATION NOTES

ANIMAL AND PLANT CONTROL COMMISSION

## BONESEED



*Closeup of leaves*



*Closeup of flowers*



*Boneseed seedling*



*Mature boneseed bush*

Boneseed, *Chrysanthemoides monilifera*, is a perennial shrub introduced from South Africa as an ornamental garden plant. It is not restricted by climate and will tolerate most soil types and coastal conditions. It is therefore important to keep boneseed out of uninfested vegetation, or to recognise and destroy new infestations before they become established.

## Distribution

Eyre Peninsula	- isolated patchy populations
Northern pastoral	- one record at Angorichina in Flinders Ranges
Northern ag districts / Yorke Peninsula	- small, isolated infestations
Murray Mallee	- isolated plants along the Murray River
South East	- isolated infestations on roadsides, reserves and some native vegetation
Central region	- widespread in the Adelaide hills

## Impacts

Boneseed is not an agricultural weed as it is rarely found in crops or pastures. It is however a serious threat to native vegetation. It will establish in a wide range of native vegetation types - scrub, woodland and forest - and out-compete and eliminate many native species. This is of particular significance when rare or endangered species are threatened. Boneseed will establish most readily on disturbed sites such as cleared, cultivated or burnt areas. It is invasive due to its rapid rate of growth, large seed store in the soil and ability to regenerate after fire. Boneseed also has a greater effective leaf area and more vigorous root system than many native species, giving it a competitive advantage. Boneseed may also have allelopathic properties that prevent some plants from growing near it. Dense stands of boneseed drastically alter the habitat of native birds and animals.

## Recognition

Boneseed is an erect perennial shrub to 2m, or much taller in sheltered sites, with a woody trunk and bright yellow, daisy-like flowers. Leaves are 3- 8 cm long, bright green, waxy with irregularly shallow-toothed edges. The fruits of boneseed are dry berries 6-8mm in diameter; they are green at first, turn black and then flake off to show the hard white inner coat. Each fruit holds one seed which is bone coloured and very hard.

## Biology

Boneseed reproduces by seed, which germinates at any time of the year but mainly in autumn. Rapid growth occurs over winter and a few plants flower in their first year. Flowers are formed in late winter and spring and the ripe seeds are shed in summer. The hard seed coat allows seed to remain dormant in the soil for many years with only some germinating each year. A fire will stimulate all the seed to germinate at once.

Birds are a major method of spread as they eat the fruit of boneseed and transport it to other locations. Rabbits, foxes, and cattle also eat the fruit and spread the seeds in their droppings. Contaminated soil and water can also carry boneseed seeds.

Further Information:

Parsons, W.T. & Cuthbertson, E.G. (2000). *Noxious Weeds of Australia*. 2nd edn. Inkata Press.

Copyright ©2001 Animal and Plant Control Commission of SA

**For more advice on recognising and controlling boneseed, contact your local Animal and Plant Control Board:**