

# Weed surveillance: how to do it?

**Helen Braithwaite  
& Susan M. Timmins**

Science & Research Unit  
Department of Conservation  
PO Box 10 420, Wellington  
New Zealand  
email: [hbraithwaite@doc.govt.nz](mailto:hbraithwaite@doc.govt.nz)  
[stimmins@doc.govt.nz](mailto:stimmins@doc.govt.nz)

Weed surveillance aims to detect new weed species early, be they newly arrived, freshly naturalised or widespread species recently established in a region. Early detection improves the chances of effective control. A system is required to translate new observations into action. The system being developed by the New Zealand Department of Conservation (DOC) includes actively and fortuitously collected weed sightings. Comments and suggestions are welcomed.

Surveillance effort should focus on:

**Places - Look in:**

- Valuable sites
- Vulnerable sites

**Species - Look for:**

- Likely species
- Nasty species



**Information sources**

- Conservancy Weed Technical Support Officer
- Surveillance List
- National Weeds Database
- Herbaria
- Overseas data
- Reference books
- Expert help

Weed Programme Manager (Area level)

**Decision process**

- Enough information?
- First record?
- Weedy elsewhere in NZ?
- Weedy in other countries?
- Size of infestation?
- Potential to spread?
- Value of invaded site?
- Threat to conservation values?
- Cost/benefit of action/inaction?
- Ease of control?

**Follow up**

**Recording**

- Document the control action
- Input into National Weeds Database

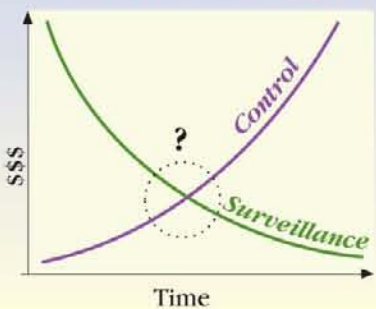
**Feedback**

- Advise observer of outcome
- Statistics on value of surveillance

**Weed Awareness**

- Weed tool kits
- Popular articles and photographs
- Publicity on new sightings
- Information to volunteer groups

**Cost/benefit analysis**



**Assessment**

Far out! Help!!!  
No problem  
Don't know  
Potential threat  
Too far gone  
Easy  
Small infestation  
Scary!

**Actions**

- No action needed
- Pull it out now
- Half a day's work soon
- Find out more
- Propose weed-led programme
- Propose site-led programme
- Abandon hope...