

We need a change – but are we ready to do it?

It has taken me almost two decades to realise that we are guilty of being led down the garden path by something that can only be described as mass hysteria regarding the threat, perceived or otherwise, of *Weeds* – OK, what I mean is that we have been hammering away at the same old truism's about what *Nature* wants and what is best for our environment that we have lost the plot, I believe, that the “educators” as well as their “disciples”, have been dishing out some good stuff by way of the creation of information and courses that acknowledge and recognise the need to do things differently, but, at the same time there is a lot off incredibly unrealistic crap that, frankly, beggars belief.

It is almost inconceivable that we have collectively created a gigantic *industry* out of the manic desire to eliminate all species of vegetation that has been declared as a *weed*. One recent figure suggests that we spend over 4 billion dollars per annum on vegetation control. This suggests that *someone* out there is pushing the right buttons with the support of what can only be described as a cult following of “weed-haters”, keeping the pesticide industry a lot healthier than our landscape will ever be..

Agriculturalist, native vegetation workers of all manner, and educators of all of the above have built a mind-set of vilification and hatred regarding all things considered *weeds*, and have successfully included both State and Federal Governments to adopt this attitude with the expectation that vast amounts of money will continue to copiously pour into the quest to battle the war on weeds of mass destruction via large groups, organisations that trickle down to small groups of landowners, bush regenerators, students and those on a “working- for- the- dole” programs..

2.

These people, I am absolutely amazed to say, range from scientific backgrounds to bush regenerators trained by our own Technical and Further Education courses, as well as and many hundreds of individuals that work in the various Government agencies that are responsible for the natural landscape and vegetation control programs.

To put it simply – the whole *weed-hatred* thing is mainly driven by:

“THE PROVENANCE POLICE”.

These obsessive-compulsive individuals can range from highly educated individuals to a number of young people seeking work in the horticultural industry, but they all share the fanatical cause with religious fervor using, as a *bible*, a number of publications that contain names of specific plant species that are considered as “belonging” to a certain place, region or State. Any plant that is not listed as “the chosen ones” are declared “noxious” or simply *weeds*, or just graded on a level of risk and targeted accordingly. There is no argument or consideration or debate. It must be destroyed and replaced with a “*native*” plant.

Now, so far, I reckon that most people reading this fail to see what is wrong with this practice, so, what I am about to write will possibly cause you to turn your back on what I believe or Instead, hopefully, you might at least open up your mind and thoughts and let me at least give you something to think about.

WEEDS – Man's salvation

The vast number of books written on the subject that I am about to write about will probably not be found in any University, TAFE or local council libraries or even on sale at the major booksellers throughout the country.

so I guess they could be considered “underground” literature.

3.

A lot of the information that has been published from these books and papers can be found on the internet. Just try “googling” the words, “Beneficial weeds” (NOT Australia-the World wide web), and you might be surprised what you will find. I am going to do it right now and tell you what I found.

http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/1530/?utm_source=nl_2008-09-01&utm_medium=email

OK, this is a start, I have found numerous publications from around the world.

Here's another:

<http://www.pfaf.org/leaflets/usefulweeds.php>

<http://www.naturalsequenceassociation.org.au>

I am not merely suggesting here that we all should start to eat weeds as some people do but I do want to make the point that most writers agree that weeds have a very important role to play in the protection of our poor soils and drought conditions we have across this Australian landscape as well as the areas frequently inundated with flood and bushfires. This leads me to another vexing question. What have the eucalyptus species ever done for us beside bursting into a raging inferno at the drop of a hat destroying property and lives as well as causing untold millions of damages in insurance pay-outs.

Sure it looks good in some parts of the country and is very-much an Aussie-Icon but this “mono-culture”, created by our Aborigines some thousands of years ago has to be the most destructive and damaging threat to all who live in this Country and dare to live

with the constant threat of this species and other fire-reliant species in this hot, dry and waterless landscape and climate.

4.

“Give me a home among the gum trees”

This well known children’s song is an indication of how blinded we have become to the reality of embracing a species of vegetation that, not only has the potential to kill many people, and has done so just recently, but also has wiped out peoples homes, their dreams and in many cases the main source of income for many rural families. Please give me an argument about that if you can manage to find one.

You know, there are quite a number of species, including some natives that are basically “fire-retardant”, but you are unlikely to find them being planted by the likes of “Greening Australia”. An organisation that survives on funding from Government and other sources. Most of it’s seed-stock is propogated from local agricultural university nurseries. The species of seed-stock is strictly controlled and groups such as the NCC (Nature Conservation Council) and other provenance watchdogs keep a steady hand on the tiller when it comes to acting as “provenance police”, and appear to be an effective and successful lobby group to Government Ministers and their respective “agencies”.

To put it in simple words, this absurd practice must be stopped and a serious review and debate must commence as soon as possible to address these issues and bring about policy and attitude changes that will benefit, not only our environment but also our potential to save many millions of wasted dollars on the present mindsets and the numerous *regimes* that presently harbour biased and possibly dangerous behaviours that are undoubtedly adding to the pressures and threats of global warming.