

## **Introduction to California's Top Weeds Discussion Group**

Topic Leaders: Jim Dempsey (JD), Mark Heath (MH)

Notetaker: Marla Knight (MK)

Discussion of good general resources:

- Weed Workers' Handbook
- The Symposium, both networking and reviewing old proceedings
- Invasive Plants of California's Wildlands (book)
- The Nature Conservancy's invasives website [tncweeds.ucdavis.edu](http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu).
- Cal-IPC website, and others linked from there
- CaliforniaWeedTalk listserv for accessing a community of weed workers

**Question:** is there a web site for planting recommendations after weed elimination?

**Answer:** Not really. Resource Conservation Districts, environmental consultants, nurseries, Google scholar might be good places to find advice and/or links to resources. Local experts are best, they know the local conditions and might know what works best for your area.

**Question:** What are the state's dirty dozen?

**Answer:** It depends on your area. Call your County Ag commissioner for the weeds that are a concern locally.

JD presented *Ailanthus* control as an example. He uses specialized tools for girdling. While conifers are killed completely by girdling, *Ailanthus* requires that herbicides are included with girdling. Young plants can be pulled, and this can be effective if you get the root. (Reference: 2003 paper by Joe DiTomaso on *Ailanthus* control). For a fall application, use: basal oil carrier for "caution level" herbicides (State Park rules only allow "caution" level chemicals) such as Garlon 4 (triclopyr), Amazapyr, Stalker, Chopper, and Arsenal. In the spring, water based treatment such as 50%-100 Roundup, Stalker, Habitat.

**Question:** How big a diameter can be girdled?

**Answer:** Diameter of 3-4 inches.

**Question:** How wide a band do you girdle?

**Answer:** Not very wide, just enough to injure. 6-12".

**Question:** What about figs? They are reproters, so you can't just cut them.

**Answer:** Have to come back with chemicals on resprouts. First time treatment is preferred. Or you can leave standing dead trees, which can provide habitat, but is often not OK due to hazard and aesthetics. Or you can try to shade out new growth with shade cloth—solarization.

**Question:** What about black locust?

**Answer:** Same deal.

**Question:** Do natives just come back after treatment? Or do you plant? What happens after treatment?

**Answer:** It really depends on the situation. In some cases, other weeds tend to come in. In other cases, there's a strong native seed bank that can come back. When you do play out natives for restoration, it's important to use local seed sources. And of course you need to keep following up.

**Question:** Describe the process for approaching a weed problem? What do you do?

**Answer:** First you need to define your objective. Then you take a look at the recommended approaches for dealing with the specific types of weeds you want to address—this is where the extensive resources through Cal-IPC help. Then you look at what level of resources you have available to support the work, and decide on the best fit.

**Question:** What about seed bank issues?

**Answer:** With plants like gorse, a leguminous plant whose seeds can last about 30 years, you need to eliminate the seed bank to consider the infestation fully eradicated. One tactic is to treat in a way that causes the seed bank to flush (like fire), then come back with another treatment.

**Question:** What are considered the top weeds?

**Answer:** (from group participation)

- Yellow starthistle
- Arundo
- Brooms
- Pampas/jubata grass
- Tamarisk
- Tumbleweed (Russian thistle)
- Vetch
- Annual grasses, cheat grass.
- Beach grass, ice plant
- Sahara mustard in the desert
- Cape ivy, vinca in riparian areas
- Blackberry

Thing that makes some plants really bad is their ability to re-engineer the environment. For instance, the ability of annual grasses to alter fire regimes. But regional differences dictate what the biggest problems are in a given area—California is diverse.

**Question:** Is tarping an effective method?

**Answer:** It can be. Permalon is cheaper than plastic, and more durable.