Containing and Reducing the Spread of Volutaria Across California: Lessons Learned

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Lessons Learned

• We found Volutaria in 2011
• It is native to North Africa and the Mediterranean
• It is found in 4 sites in Southern California
  • 1 site has been extirpated

• What did we learn?
Lesson #1: Identification

Get an ID of a species you are unsure of, especially if there are several to many of them at your site.
Lesson #2: Don’t trust the experts

- Photos were sent to Dr. Gerhard Wagenitz (RIP 2017)
- ID came back as *Volutaria canariensis*
- A Canary Island endemic, with no history of spreading

The real lesson is you are going to make mistakes, learn from ours, learn from yours.
Lesson #3 Attend Meetings

- You’ll meet some great people at meetings
- If you can’t find a meeting to attend, create your own meetings
Lesson #4: Find Frank

- When you are attending meetings, and show in interest in the meeting, people may talk to you about their problems
- Find Frank! Listen to Frank!
- His problems might be the same as your problems
  i.e. weeds, lots of them
Lesson #5: Be a part of a team

• Find a team of interested people who want to help kill the weeds
• If you can’t find a team then make your own team
• You might even have a team of one = You

Also, don’t be afraid to merge teams, or admit that someone else’s team might be better. Just find a way to be on the best team, or on separate teams to get different jobs done.
Lesson #5: Be a part of a team

- Find a team of interested people who want to help kill your weeds
Lesson #5: Be a part of a team

• Teams learn more than you can

• First known Borrego contact:

• In February 2010 two botanists on a hike notice an unusual plant growing in Alcoholic Pass in ABDSP

• Returning later in the season the plant was missing
  • RT Hawke, Tom Chester
Lesson #5: Be a part of a team

• Teams can do more than you can
Lesson #5: Be a part of a team

• Teams learn more than you can
• First known California contact:
• In May 1987 Robert De Ruff took a photo of a plant *Centaurea muricata* (mis-ID’d)
• It’s Volutaria!
• Ron Vanderhoff found Robert’s webpage and cracked the case wide open!
Lesson #6: Learn Something

- Oh, you are going to have to learn so many things!
- Possibly like, how to kill your weed
- Where does it come from?
- Who else has this weed?
- How fast is it spreading?
- How long does the seed live?
- What types of habitats is it found in?
Lesson #6: Learn Something

• Once we learned the Newport population had been there for 30 years, we immediately realized its spreading slowly along the coast and faster in the desert.
Lesson #7: Become the expert

• There is a chance no one else in your part of the world has seen this weed

• If you are learning something you are gaining expertise

• If you have more expertise with this species than everyone else around you, you are now an expert
Lesson #8: Think Big

This was the extent of the known populations in 2013

We hadn’t even gone digital yet!

I hadn’t found Frank or Ron yet!

We didn’t know about the Newport population yet!
Lesson #8: Think Big
Lesson #9: Get Digital
Lesson #10: Scale UP

- Cal-IPC received a grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, San Diego County has grants from CDFA and WMA funding to monitor and manage Volutaria in Southern California.
Lesson #11: Predict the future
Lesson #11: Predict the future

- 2027
Lesson #11: Predict the Future

2019

110 Miles!!
Lesson #12: Trust the experts

• In the beginning there was a lot to learn, we knew so little, we made mistakes!
• We now know just enough to manage this species
• Learning is not a straightforward path
• Life does not follow the straight and narrow path
Questions?

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