

2 BACKGROUND TO THE KIT

The following chapter has been included to try and answer some of the questions you may have regarding the camphor laurel kit and its production. Questions such as: Who produced the kit and why? Where did that strategy come from? Why control camphor laurel amongst native vegetation or on prime agricultural land first? etc. Section 2.3 also lists other related strategies.

Some parts of this chapter have been based on a format produced in Thorp (1999) "Weeds of national significance. Guidelines for developing weed strategies".

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2.1 Reason for the kit and process followed

A number of groups and individuals are working on control of camphor laurel including local weed control authorities, Councils and other government departments. Approximately 1/3 of all Landcare groups within the region are also working on some camphor laurel control. Many of the groups / individuals involved in control are working independently from each other and there has often been a lack of information-sharing or co-ordination between them.

As mentioned in Chapter 1.4, camphor laurel has both negative and positive features and hence it is important that a range of issues are considered before control is undertaken.

The Camphor Laurel Kit has been developed on behalf of the NSW North Coast Weed Advisory Committee through Regional Weed Action Program funding from the State Weed Advisory Committee. The funding allowed for the employment of a Project Officer for a 12 month period to produce strategies and related information for the management of camphor laurel, bitou bush and a number of other environmental weeds.

The Camphor Laurel Kit aims to assist Landcare groups, local weed control authorities, Councils and other government departments, public utilities, bush regenerators and individuals working on control of camphor laurel on the NSW North Coast and elsewhere. It contains suggested control methods and ways to improve coordination, education and involvement. It is for use at both the regional level and at the “hands-on” local level.

2.1.1 Camphor laurel taskforce

As part of the project a taskforce has been established comprising experts and stakeholders from throughout the region. The taskforce’s role is to have direct input into the Kit and strategies and oversee their implementation into the future.

2.1.2 Public consultation

The development of the Kit has involved extensive community and departmental consultation including public workshops, numerous on-ground inspections of control works and meetings with [local Weed Control Authorities](#), Landcare groups, ~~local weed control authorities~~, Councils and other government departments throughout the region.

Plate 11: A small group session at one of the public workshops. Source: S.Jamieson



2.1.3 Regional Strategies

Regional strategies to improve co-ordination, efficiency and involvement have been produced and are included in Chapter 9.

2.1.4 Future research

As there are still many questions needing answers a number of future research needs have been listed in Chapter 10 and will be circulated to research institutions throughout the region and elsewhere.

2.1.5 Community awareness and media campaigns

Community awareness activities such as field days have been promoted in most Shire's within the region and have been attended by as many as 200 people. Media campaigns, including a television advertisement entitled "look down on camphor" (planned for 2001) will continue to focus attention on the need to control camphor laurel.

2.1.6 Value Adding

Whilst the Kit and strategies have been produced, another related project has been developing. Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils (NOROC), State and Regional Development (SARD), camphor laurel millers / merchants, NSW State Forests, Southern Cross University, Far North Coast Weeds and others have been working together to promote and expand the camphor laurel value adding industry, culminating in the formation of The Australian Camphor Timbers Association (see chapter 7).

2.2 Principles underpinning the kit

The content of the kit is based on several important principles relating to:

2.2.1 Integrated weed management

Weed management is an essential and integral part of the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment (Thorp, 1999). Integrated weed management, where a range of techniques are used in combination, is well recognised as being the most effective weed control (e.g Floyd and Dodkin 1984, Joseph 1995, 1999, Hunter 1997). The techniques chosen depend on the individual situation and site characteristics.

2.2.2 Improved coordination

As there is limited funding available for the control of camphor laurel it is important to work together wherever possible to combine resources and strengths. The Camphor Laurel Taskforce has been established to encourage stakeholders to work together more and encourage more information sharing.

2.2.3 Appropriate planning

Before undertaking any weed control obtain all relevant information and have a plan as to what you are trying to achieve. Important components of pre-control planning are the setting of goals, documenting and assessing the site, researching and asking questions, developing action plans and being flexible when producing timelines.

2.2.4 Prevention / early intervention

Prevention and early intervention are the most cost-effective techniques that can be deployed against weeds (NWSEC 1999). For this reason, priority is given to the control of isolated and new infestations. In heavy infestations where mature camphor laurels are being controlled gradually it is also important to keep controlling camphor laurel seedlings so that they are not allowed to mature. Training in ways to minimise the spread of weeds is recommended for Councils and public utility staff throughout the region.

2.2.5 Protection of native vegetation and significant habitats

Priority is given to control of camphor laurel amongst native vegetation because:

- Camphor laurels can actively compete with native vegetation and hence lead to a reduction in biodiversity;
- Camphor laurel is invading a number of areas that support threatened species;
- Starting control in good quality vegetation areas where there are few weeds can mean a small amount of work can achieve a lot;

- Protection and planting of alternate native food sources is an important long-term control strategy for camphor laurel so that birds, bats and other fauna can feed on, and hence disperse, native plants instead of camphor laurel.

Camphor laurel forms a major component of some bushland corridors (pers. obs.) and its value as stepping stones for the movement of fruit-eating pigeons is well known (e.g Date et. al. 1991, Recher et. al. 1995, Date et. al. 1996). Bushland corridors are also vital for the movement of mammals, reptiles and other fauna and plant propagules (seeds, spores etc.). The biodiversity of bushland corridors improves agricultural productivity (e.g Saunders et. al. 1985, Walpole, 1999). Control of camphor laurel in bushland corridors is important to enhance biodiversity, however, it must be done in a gradual and sensitive manner to ensure that the habitat values of the corridor are protected and enhanced.

2.2.6 Protection of prime agricultural land

Camphor laurels are invading many agricultural areas throughout the region. Prime agricultural land is given a higher priority for control because:

- It generally receives more financial returns than other agricultural land;
- The increased threat posed through faster growth on better soils, and;
- The importance of prime agricultural land in terms of food / agricultural production.

2.2.7 Replacement

Weeds tend to grow more vigorously where gaps are created. To ensure that camphor laurels are not replaced by more camphor laurels or other weeds such as privet (see 6.1 for other weeds) it is important to replace them with native species (through natural regeneration and/or planting) or competitive pasture etc.

2.2.8 Value Adding

Camphor laurel is a valuable resource (see Chapter 7). As there is limited funding available for its control, value adding opportunities must be taken wherever possible.

2.3 Relationship to other strategies

Strategies that include the control of camphor laurel and / or other environmental weeds have been developed at several levels. They include:

2.3.1 National Level

- National Strategy for the conservation of Australia's biological diversity
- National Strategy for ecological sustainable development
- National Weeds Strategy

2.3.2 State Level

- NSW Weed Strategy
- NSW Biodiversity Strategy

2.3.3 Regional / Catchment / Shire level

- Regional Vegetation Management Plans
- Catchment Management Strategies and Strategic Plans
- Local Government Native Vegetation Management Strategies

2.1.1 Local Level

- National Park, reserve and roadside management plans
- Community project management plans