

Short report for EWRS (European Weed Research Society) Newsletter

Creation of a new EWRS Working Group on Invasive Plants

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The problems generated by invasive plants worldwide concern environmental and agricultural weed scientists as well as the public. Considering the threat that invasive plants represent for the biodiversity in natural, semi-natural and aquatic habitats, they have been defined as “environmental weeds”.

Several environmental weeds are also noxious agricultural weeds (e.g. *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, *Senecio inaequidens*, *Vulpia myuros*, ...). Also numerous biological characteristics conferring weediness to plant species (e.g. breeding strategy, seed dispersal and longevity, growth rate, ...) are similar in both natural and agricultural areas. Last but not least, large areas devoted to agriculture, such as pastures, are in fact very near to natural habitats and are subject to invasive processes.

Therefore it seems obvious that exchange of knowledge and experience between environmental and agricultural weed scientists as well as other specialists would be of great benefit to all. For instance weed control methods developed in agriculture can be valuable in improving weed management in natural habitats. And, experiences on phytosociology of invasive plants in nature can be beneficial for the development of weed control in agriculture.

SciCom decided to establish a new working group on invasive plants, including aquatic weeds. The mission of the new working group will include :

- Assisting communication and information exchange between agricultural and environmental researchers, between scientists and professionals, between individuals and organizations, between national and international organizations.
- Identifying key research and control technology needs and encouraging their execution, including collaborative programmes.
- Organizing meetings, symposia and conferences, and to including the topic on existing meetings.
- Encouraging and assisting education and training on invasive plants (control, horticultural and environmental aspects) for institutions, students, professionals (road services) and general public.

Research topics to be covered by the new WG will be : agricultural weeds / environmental weeds; phytosociology of invaded places; human activities and invasive plants; prevention and management; non-chemical and chemical control methods in various environments.

We hope to gather a group with scientists and practitioners of many different professions like agricultural and biological researchers, environmentalists, conservationists, water specialists, road services, etc.

The activities of the WG on Invasive Plants will include potential interactions with already existing EWRS Working Groups on Biological Control of Weeds, Weeds and Biodiversity, Site-Specific Weed Management, Optimisation of Herbicide Dose, Education and Training, Aquatic Weeds. They will also include close collaboration with already existing research/policy networks in Europe and elsewhere.

The Invasive Plants Working Group will have its first meeting at RAC Changins Nyon, Switzerland on Monday, the 6th February 2006. Anyone interested in this subject is invited to participate. Further information and a tentative agenda will soon be circulated.

Anyone interested in Invasive Plants please contact the coordinator of the WG for further information on the future activities and for inclusion in the Working Group mailing list:

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