



WANTED

WATSONIA

Watsonia sp.

Glossary

Annual

Completing the full cycle of germination to fruiting to a single year, and then dying

Basal

Arise from corm.

Bulbil

Fleshy bud that may fall to produce a new plant.

Corm

Storage organ, formed from enlarged underground stem base.

Perennial

With a life span extending over more than two growing seasons.

Tufted

Loose clumping of stems at base.

For More Information

Contact

Eastern Hills Catchment Management Program
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Shire of Mundaring
Bushcare Co-ordinator
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Shire of Kalamunda
Bushcare Co-ordinator
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Introduction

Watsonia was originally introduced as a garden flower and was once widely, but now rarely, planted as an ornamental.

However, it has become extensively naturalised in Western Australia and is now a major environmental weed of disturbed bushland and roadsides, particularly near water.

Watsonia favour moist conditions and withstand flooding for several weeks. It also grows well on higher well drained sites. Ironically, some garden catalogues still list Watsonia bulbs for sale.

Origin

South Africa

Status:

A Declared Plant in the Shire of Kalamunda's Pest Plant By-Law, 1979 and is a priority weed species for the Shire of Kalamunda and the Shire of Mundaring.

Lifeform

Perennial herb

Description

An erect, tufted herb with a flowering spike, usually unbranched and up to 2 m tall; with many large flowers.

Leaves: Erect, basal; sword shaped; tough; fibrous; up to 1 metre in length.

Flowers/Seedheads: Pink/

orange/scarlet; 1.5-3.5 cm long.

Reproduction & Dispersion

Spreads by corms and bulbils moved by earth moving equipment and water. These are mainly at the base of the leaves, but occasionally up the flower spike. When in fruit, the corms spread very efficiently along rivers, wetlands and roadside table drains.

Although it has an annual flowering cycle, the bulb also reproduces to create more plants for subsequent years.

Growing Habit

It grows vigorously in moist soil, such as: water courses, drains and roadside verges.

Distribution

Perth - Albany; population around Esperance.

Growing Season

Late autumn - spring

Flowering Season

After 2-3 years growth; spring - summer.

Fruits

Many small corms at each node up the flowering plant.

Effect on Ecosystem

It is a very serious weed in the wetter Southwest, often invading bushland.

Manual Removal

Removal of the entire plant by hand pulling is achievable in late winter when the soil is damp. Care must be taken to ensure that the underground bulb is removed. Burn the corms and bulbils.

Grazing provides effective control. Cultivation also provides good control if done after the old corm is exhausted or before the flower stem emerges. Do not mow or slash. Thick infestations are difficult to control manually.

Chemical Treatment

Use of non-selective herbicides in conjunction with mechanical control methods will give good results for thick infestations.

Wipe individual leaves with glyphosate or spray dense infestations. Eradication from an area usually takes two to three years.

Please see 'Herbicides and Pesticides' factsheet for more information about spraying.



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